

ORAL HISTORY

MILDRED EDMONDSON

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Women in California Collection

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Oral History of

Mildred Edmondson

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California Historical Society
Women in California Collection

Interview History

Oral History of MILDRED EDMONDSON

Born March 14, 1914

Now living at her home in San Rafael, California

Interviews held on April 22, May 11, June 21 and
November 11, 1976

Time of Interviews: Approximately four hours

The following is a transcription of an interview with Mildred Edmondson, intended as part of the series on progressive and trade union women for the California Historical Society Women in California Collection.

Originally Mrs. Edmondson was asked to participate because of her activities just prior to World War II when, as an employee of the Department of Employment, she made a field survey of the comparison of wages between men and women. This was printed as "Trade Union Handbook for Women" and used throughout the Bay Area by the Department of Employment. Unfortunately no copy of this study could be located.

The interview was done, as were several others, in the enthusiasm of a new tape recorder, a burning ambition to record women's histories, and a lack of expertise and training in the field. Ms. Edmondson recognized this. Through kindness and friendship she allowed the interview to proceed, only indicating her thoughts and opinions at the end when asked her thinking on the interview.

When the interview did not develop, as originally planned, the interviewer went off in hap hazard directions. She now feels this is a sketchy narrative, dealing with the life of a woman who was unusual in her field for her time, and who surmounted many difficulties in the course of her life. The interview, indeed, does not treat her or her contribution to women's history fairly.

The saving grace may be that it does touch on certain aspects of personal development of a woman who became socially conscious, active in union causes as well as "women's issues." Her experiences can offer students and researchers some insight into the problems of women making a living for themselves during this period of the thirties and forties.

Conduct of the Interview

The interviews were conducted at Ms. Edmondson's home in Marin County. It is a charming cottage with a garden in which she works some mornings. The house is modestly furnished; and has an excellent collection of paintings and objects picked up in her travels. Bookcases abound with well thumbed books.

The Interviewee

Ms. Edmondson is a slight, vibrant person, very outgoing. She is highly respected in her field, and is very knowledgeable about many aspects of work outside of her field of Rehabilitation Counseling.

Editing

The original transcript was corrected by Ms. Edmondson, and has been retyped with very little additional editing by the interviewer. Only slight changes were made in sentence structure, cutting of false starts, and occasional duplication of thoughts.

Narrative Account of the Interview

The interview begins with childhood experiences, family life, schooling and outside activities. It establishes an early close relationship with narrator's father which develops into respect and friendship. It then continues with college years, job career, including a period as Trade Union Liaison Officer with the War Manpower Commission during World War II, and her activities in the State and Federal Workers Union organization, two marriages, the birth of a child. Then her fight for a job with the State Rehabilitation Board on the grounds of overt discrimination against women. It concludes with her opinions on various aspects of women's lives and problems today.

Mrs. Edmondson represents a forerunner of the career woman of today, as she indicates that women didn't even consider work so much of a career as a job during the thirties and forties.

It is regrettable that the interviewer is the second wife of Ms. Edmondson's first husband. Thus matters of motherhood, divorce, and even remarriage are carefully skirted. This naturally leaves great holes in the interview.

Lucy Kendall
February, 1978

Interview with Mildred Edmondson
For the California Historical Society
Women in California Collection

Date: April 22, 1976

Interviewer: Lucy Kendall

Ken: What was the date of your birth?

Ed: March 14, 1914.

Ken: Where were you born?

Ed: Oroville, California.

Ken: What was your maiden name?

Ed: DuBose.

Ken: Is that a French name?

Ed: Yes. We do have a family tree that some relative looked up, and this DuBose has been in the country a long time - ever since the Huguenots were massacred in France.

Ken: What about your mother's side?

Ed: She was one of twelve children, whose father was the only one of his family who immigrated from Cornwall, England. He came to this country and settled in Michigan, up near Lake Superior. He had been a copper miner, but also a stone mason. He met a New York lady and they were married. They had nine living children. They migrated to California sometime at the end of the nineteenth century.

Ken: Where did your mother and father meet?

Ed: My mother was in Oroville. Her family were up in the Sacramento Valley. My father was born in Texas, and had left home very young and came to California and worked on the Western Pacific Railroads. He went into business for himself in Oroville - the cleaning and dying business. Mother had taken a job as a housekeeper in one of the druggist families up there. So they met in Oroville. They married in 1911.

My father was always in business for himself. Only one time, after the bust of 1929, he went to work for somebody else. And the matter of his being self-employed, I think, as a matter of fact, probably had a great deal of influence on my sense of independence. The other thing was that, being in business for himself, a small business, that I from a very young age, was always involved in the business, of assuming responsibility as a very young person. I knew what my father did, and I knew how these things worked.

My mother never worked, except in the later years when us kids were in high school. She was principally a homemaker.

Ken: How many children did they have?

Ed: I had one sister.

Ken: Are you the oldest, or the youngest?

Ed: I am the oldest.

Ken: Are you a wanted child?

Ed: I think probably so. This is an interesting thing because my mother always - it seemed to me my mother always favored my younger sister who was three years younger than I was. She was born in 1917. At that point my mother had mixed feelings about this pregnancy. She told me, in later years, that she was scared of having that child because she was scared that my father might go off to World War I, and there she would be alone with two infants.

Ken: Did you get along all right with your sister?

Ed: Most of the while. We had most of the usual sister problems. She was always a much more temperamental child than I was. My mother said that I seemed to grow up very fast after my sister was born - that I certainly was the apple of my father's eye. There is no question about this.

Incidentally, speaking about education, I think this should be mentioned. My mother and father, neither of them had more than five years' schooling. They were very literate people. They both, of course, read and could read and write. But the interesting thing about my father is he might be classified as a non-reader today. He had real difficulty reading. He was a very bright man and he always said, "If I had had an education I would like to have been a lawyer," because he could speak well. He went to night school to improve his reading. And it was a hard struggle for him to work all day and then go to night school because he wanted to be able to read faster. But he was a very eloquent and persuasive leader of men. He read the papers, such as the Christian Science Monitor. He would often say, "Read this article. Let's talk about it."

My mother was much more occupied with my kid sister who I always felt was a very lovely and very talented. Early on she developed a real talent in art, in dancing, and in that sort of thing.

I was given piano lessons and played in recitals.

The contrast, in a way, between the directions we took - I think we can assume we were both in the same general level of intelligence because I know the I.Q. score, and I know my sister's score.

Ed: It was in the upper 90th percentile of the population. I had certainly fooled around in high school and in junior high school. Was very active in all kinds of things.

Ken: I think we are going too fast. I want to find out more. What about your financial situation?

Ed: I would say, probably middle class. We moved from Oroville, a small Sacramento Valley town, down to the Bay Area - Oakland - in 1922. I was nine years old, or nearly nine. That was a big move for my family. My father sold his business, principally because we would occasionally come down to the bay area for a few months, or a month in the summertime.

My mother, who was overweight, suffered from the heat tremendously. As kids, of course, we loved living up in Oroville because we were one block from the Feather River. And we would go swimming morning, noon, and often at night. And we were (let me think) - I do not know who made that family decision. I am unclear about it. Mama certainly pushed.

I can remember dancing alone in a great big orange and olive exposition - making my own sort of Isadora Duncan type of dance draped in nothing but a piece of cheesecloth and some rose garlands, barefooted, before several thousand people. And even in 1917 (I was only three years old) of singing in side shows, raising money for Liberty bonds during World War I. So, the matter of my very early childhood, I think, of risking myself, of being alone and moderately unafraid - often dancing or leading the lines, and singing, and having people pay to come in and see the little girl. I am quite sure that that sort of very young experience at the ages of four, five, and six, had been a confirming thing in terms of my own self image about myself.

I went into some competitive sports. I was very athletic. I always would be captain of the team, whatever it was, in intramural sports in junior high school.

And the financial situation, of course, when we moved down here from Oroville to the bay area - Oh, there was another reason. My father was offered a job managing a large cleaning department of a corporation that was setting up a big commercial laundry which, after a couple of years when the depression hit, went broke. That was the interval when he did work for somebody else. We are talking now about 1927. This was before the big crash. A lot of things historically began to happen before 1929 that certainly weren't being noted too much.

Ken: Were your parents religious at all?

Ed: Yes and no. In the early 1920's they sent us off to the Congregational Sunday School. Then my father developed what was known as gasoline poisoning. This resulted in a perfectly awful dermatitis, big sores and blisters all over him. He sought out all kinds of specialists in the bay area. Their conclusion was that he would have to stay away from gasoline forever. So he put his cleaning and dying business up for sale in Oroville. One of the buyers who began to inquire about it said, "You know, you really don't have to sell the business because of health reasons." And then he told him about Christian Science. My father had tried everything and said, "What the hell, why not?" He tried Christian Science, and from what we do know about skin problems and contact dermatitis, he was able to continue in the cleaning and dying business and could "take a bath" in gasoline. It wouldn't bother him. So, as a consequence, we moved into Christian Science. And from the time I was about five or six years until I was about twenty one or twenty two, and even longer, I never had a doctor in my life. And I had all the childhood diseases, but never had a doctor.

Ken: Did you go to the Christian Science church?

Ed: I went to the Christian Science Sunday school.

Ken: Did it take?

Ed: Yes, it took - it took. I was into it so young that I had no basis for any judgment. I had seen, I had known from my personal knowledge, what is referred to in Christian Science as "demonstration" - my father. So it wasn't until I got into college that I began to say how could a person be into Christian Science and be a chemist, for example, at the same time. And my father and I would argue. We were given to deep, profound, wonderful arguments on practically everything in the world.

Ken: Did you argue politics?

Ed: Not very often politics. We agreed. I remember the Hoover administration. They had been Republican. It was at that point, in the late 1920's, when FDR [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] came up and the whole disillusion with Hoover occurred. Then it was really a very traumatic switch to move from Republican to a Democratic stance.

Ken: And that is what your father did?

Ed: Yes.

Ken: What were his politics after that?

Ed: Always the New Deal Liberalism. And he would never be radical. I don't think there would be anything he would have been afraid of.

Ed: There was the business of the racketeers in the twenties resulting from the whole prohibition experiment at the time - in gangsters who tried to extort money for so-called protection of small business. There was some movement in this regard in Alameda County where my father had, at this point, a press shop rather than an actual cleaning business. At any rate, he was involved in trying to organize an association of these cleaning shops so they would be able to have a united front against these racketeers who were trying to force the individual shops to pay money for "protection". At the same time I can, very generally, remember that he felt the workers in these shops, too, should join unions. Then they would be able to reduce the cut-throat competition. The reason he was trying to organize workers was so that his competition would not be able to cut the prices down further, so that you would establish a minimum wage. Then he felt, with a minimum wage, all employers would be on even competition and you would all have to pay the same wages. You wouldn't be able to exploit somebody and have your price for a cleaning job or a press job be cut down.

Ken: He was an "enlightened" capitalist?

Ed: Yes, he certainly was. And I am sorry I don't remember -

Ken; Did he discuss this with you?

Ed: I am sure it would have been discussed with the family because he was brought (and this is why I am not sure) - there was something that he was involved in. A conspiracy, and that is the only way I can think of it now. Whether he was in a conspiracy, or was going to testify that there was not a conspiracy, I am unclear about. But that was when Earl Warren was District Attorney of Alameda County, and he was found guilty of trying to bribe the jurors in this trial. No, my father wasn't on trial, though he might have been brought to trial. This was exposed, so he did not have to stand trial himself. He was only a witness. The whole thing got blown wide open that Earl Warren had been trying to bribe the jurors.

Ken: Do you know the name of that case?

Ed: No.

Ken: What year was this?

Ed: 1928, or about that time.

Ken: Did your father suffer because of this?

Ed: No, I don't think his business suffered. It was a hell of a hard thing to go through. You see, this was the depression too, and -

Ken: The conspiracy was a conspiracy to organize workers into unions?

Ed: I don't think so. I don't know. I was not that aware. At 14 I certainly had other things on my mind.

Ken: Do you have anything else to say about your father at this point, or shall we go back to your schooling? His influence?

Ed: Not in the direct sense of radicalization, to use that word. In the sense of modeling his kind of person, I would be open to radicalization is the point, because there was tremendous sense, at one time, on the one hand, of great independence and rugged individualism, and no help from anybody else.

Finally times got so bad that he lost all the business. He set up his press shop in the basement of our house, and went from door to door. So I can see this kind of a model of survival.

Ken: So you had come down from middle class to almost poverty level?

Ed: Yes.

Ken: Was this hard on the family in any way?

Ed: I don't remember having a sense of poverty because so many were in the boat. One thing- they (my mother and father) both really worshipped the idea of an education. So I was a girl. And the mere fact that I was a girl didn't seem to matter. The message of getting good enough grades to get on to college was always there, always there as long as I can remember. I was no grind in high school.

Ken: What did you do in high school? What were you interested in?

Ed: I got away from sports in high school, competitive sports, but was involved in dramatics, student government, parliamentary club, and that sort of thing.

Ken: Were you, for instance, class secretary or president?

Ed: Yes. I was never president of the student body. But I would be secretary, or class president.

Ken: Very few girls were class presidents of student bodies at that time, actually.

Ed: Yes, that's right. I got out of high school young.

Ken: When did you start going with boys?

Ed: About thirteen or fourteen, under very good control - Halloween parties and things like that.

Ken: Tell me a little bit about your work experience.

Ed: My father's shop, and mainly other places - F.W. Woolworths. I got out of high school quite young, and there wasn't enough money put together for me to start college at that time, so I stayed out a year and worked, and finally went to college at seventeen.

In that year I did get a job as a cashier-wrapper at the Emporium-Capwell Corporation for \$10.00 a week. So my family saved this \$10.00 a week and practically gave me the carfare to get to work so I could save this money for college a year later.

Having been very active in high school, this business of going on to college is a very common experience - the high school leader kind of taking it easy academically. Then you get into competition at UC, Berkeley, and you have to commute over an hour a day to East Oakland.

Ken: You did want to go to college?

Ed: Oh yes, but there were very few people in our economic area (though he, my father, was a manager, I wouldn't even call him middle class. it had been middle class, but it was down). In our economic level there weren't half a dozen people in my graduating class who went to college. And about the same number of girls as boys. They just didn't go to college.

Ken: How happen you graduated at such a young age? You said your grades weren't any great shakes.

Ed: Oh, they were A's and B's, and I went to summer school, or something. I would go over to Alameda where my father's little shop was and spend hours and hours in the library over there, just reading voraciously every kind of thing I could lay my hands on. I would just lose myself in the library. In contrast, my sister never did. She goofed off in high school much more. I didn't goof off. It is just that I wasn't a grind. But anyway, I nearly flunked out of college because I didn't realize how much harder you had to study to stay in college as compared to the easy way with which you could get through high school.

Ken: When you were in high school, did you decide what you wanted to be?

Ed: Oh yes. I wanted to be a journalist. That was another thing I did. I worked on the paper. There

Ed: were negatives about being a teacher. My mother would say, "If I had my druthers, I would have loved to have been a kindergarden teacher." The only thing I remember my father saying, is "I would have loved to be a lawyer."

Ken: Journalism is a funny profession for women of that period. Most went into teaching, or secretarial work. Why did you decide on journalism?

Ed: I had no idea, except something romantic about journalism. And there were two schools I had a fantasy about. The University of Washington had a fine school of journalism, and so did a school in Missouri. They had fine schools of journalism at that point.

Ken: How happen you went to UC at Berkeley then?

Ed: Going away to college was absolutely a fantasy. There was hardly enough money, you know. We were barely getting by. As I say, we had no sense of being poor, but I don't think we catagorized ourselves in a way you might do today in a poverty culture. We were not in a culture of poverty.

It was a matter of commuting too. It was a good half mile walk to the street car; transfer to downtown Oakland, then go and catch the car to Berkeley. And the amount of money that I had would get a milkshake, which was exactly what I had for lunch for a long, long time. A fifteen cent milkshake was what I would have for lunch. It was a great big double milkshake. And I had to get home. You didn't bring a lunch. Food was cheap around Berkeley in those days.

The whole world of fraternities and good times. I did sign up for the Daily Cal. I couldn't manage it. I had to get home. There was no way I could stay around Berkeley.

And I was a very, very lonesome, miserable, not a very happy person. I never had any social life to speak of at UC for four years. I think that's probably the kind of thing that Jim remembers my feelings about. The whole happy life was something I could just watch and imagine, and not be a part of. But it never occurred to me not to continue. It just never occurred to me to drop out or anything. I still felt grateful, and I enjoyed the business of learning. I had marvelous teachers.

Those years in Berkeley, it was rah, rah, rah. Pretty much rah, rah, rah. My family was in difficulties, and my sister had gone to work, or was finishing high school. Then the whole turmoil of the early thirties, which were my years in

Ed: college, was super stimulating intellectually. There was the whole business of unions organizing, the New Deal, and then the General Strike in San Francisco. These were all during my college years. So, I don't know, I was caught up in that sort of thing.

And I became acquainted with a group of non-sorority. I had taken a position early on that I just really didn't care about a sorority. I don't know how I arrived at that. I had some notion, because of the reading, something came to me that I really didn't give a damn about joining a sorority.

Ken: It wasn't sour grapes, in other words?

Ed: It was not sour grapes. I think I had some contempt for that level of people who were in sororities.

Ken: You didn't work while you were going to school?

Ed: Only Saturday and on sales at Capwells. I would always go back for the sales there.

Ken: Did you take up journalism at this time?

Ed: I had an English major, and I signed up for Daily Cal. But I soon learned, being a commuter (traveling over two hours each day), the studies, and so forth, that there was no way I could be a reporter and be active on the Daily Cal. and not be a resident on or near campus. I simply had to get home at night, though often late.

Ken: So, you met a few people there?

Ed: Yes, but not many.

Ken: Was there a student movement at that time?

Ed: There was the beginning of a student movement. And I woke up being behind grade points, and also about twenty pounds lighter. That was the whole business of the reading, the studying, the commuting, the milkshakes for lunch. I had to snap into it or I would just be out of school.

I took a course in economics, just an introductory course (Economics 1A) from Ira Cross. Then got kind of turned on about personnel administration. I was a sophomore at this point, and my whole study habits had changed. I just buckled down, and it was work, work, work.

Ed: Summers were kind of fun though because there were no jobs. And it was laying around the beach, drinking gin, and having a good time with other people who were unemployed, because we didn't have anything else to do. And going to Neptune, or going to Cottage Baths over in Alameda. It didn't cost any money. And you knew there was no point in hunting for a job. So you just enjoyed yourself. You went through the motions, tried and so forth, but there were no jobs. Since there were no jobs, you might as well go to college. This was a factor. And for very little money your family could continue to feed you. They would have to feed you anyway.

My father was very interested in those times. Then I switched over to Economics because I was interested in personnel administration. And that was kind of interesting to me - that there were opportunities for women in personnel administration. And it was in some of these economic classes, as I moved into the upper division as an economics major, that I began to meet some people (this was 1933 or 1934) who had the same kind of view that I did.

Ken: What view?

Ed: There was Upton Sinclair - the socialist kind of thing. And there were really some guys I got very keen on. They were quite radical. I mean very communistic. There were groups. And I would be invited to these cell meetings, and would go to them a few times. But I never went from the socialist position to the communist position.

Ken: What was the socialist position as you saw it then?

Ed: I think it has changed. And I don't think I can remember anyway. But there was something about the rigors and the discipline from the very beginning about the communist behavior at the meetings I would go to as an observer (or invited to be recruited) that just went against this kind of rugged individualism that all the other part of my life probably built. It wasn't that the goals were different than the socialist goals. It was that the ends justified the means. I was really quite moralistic in this kind of a way. This is religious honesty, integrity. All these kinds of things, no cheating, no lies, no deceits, that I think really kept me away from ever joining the communist party. There was something. There was a discipline that I would have to be subject to that I could not tolerate.

Ken: Did you work so hard that you had no activity at all?

Ed: Really the business of getting to and from school, staying at the library (I didn't use the library the first year I was there - was scared to death to go to the

Ed: library) knowing no one. And finally, about the second year, I did get acquainted with people in economics. And there were quite a few of the liberals and social democrats. I encountered marvelous teachers - Charles Gulick, who had been over in Vienna when the fascists burned the socialist workers housing. And when that teacher recalled his personal experiences in Vienna with tears running down his cheeks - Of course I knew Charles Gulick. But there were marvelous teachers, and they weren't always political. Charles Gulick, he was labor economics, workmen's compensation, and all this kind of thing. That man influenced my mind. He put things together that my father felt. And this is the kind of thing I would come home and talk about.

One thing about my father I forgot about. He had been in the National Guard. And the National Guard had been called in to quell the agricultural labor strike in Wheatland. And I don't know much about it. There is a picture that is still around of these tents that the National Guard had. This was when we were still in Oroville. Following that experience, and whatever he saw (I wish I had his story) he resigned from the National Guard. He was never going to get in that situation again. He had those personal experiences that influenced his life, and in turn influenced mine. It is very hard, you know, to understand exactly how it was. From my earliest beginnings, despite the fact that he came from Texas, he never had any feelings of race. I went to grade school with all kinds of minorities. There was no lily white segregation where I went to grade school. There may have been several blacks in Oroville in the first few years. But there on East 14th Street in Oakland, at the Lockwood Junior High school, it was a mixture of Orientals, Portuguese, a few Mexicans probably at that time, Italians. You know, us being Anglo-Saxon - I don't remember in my life ever hearing any racist comment. I had no awareness of what Jewishness was or what Jews were until, probably, in my college years. And I was aware that I was rushed by a Jewish sorority. A lot of these girls I knew in economics were Jewish girls, and they came from very radical kinds of Jewish immigrant backgrounds.

Ken: During the 1934 strike, did it influence you in any way? Did you discuss it, and so forth?

Ed: Oh my god yes. And I have a very definite feeling that when the general strike was called and my father closed down his business there was real sympathy. I don't believe I was aware, for example, that U. C. students were brought in [to work as scabs]. I had no idea that was happening. We were just enthusiastic about it. I don't mean enthusiastic. I mean sympathetic.

Ed: From Gulick I was studying financial courses, seminars. I got totally fascinated. I had long since abandoned personnel administration. The realization that personnel administration, at that time and to a certain extent yet, really was a staff position by paternalistic corporations to keep their people happy and down, etc. - The personnel department was a hand-maiden of management. Somehow or other that just killed it for me - that it had no way of really bringing about change in the sense of my wanting something like an industrial democracy. I think that would have been my ideal. I was exposed to another course in planned economy from an immigrant German professor.

Dad and I would go to hear speeches, read papers, and have discussions. My mother, I think, felt kind of out of it because intellectually my dad and I just had a great old time. It is very possible for mothers to experience some kind of jealousy, or for daughters to feel some kind of jealousy.

Ken: Did your father feel any jealousy toward your boy friends?

Ed: No.

Ken: Were you able to have any social life in college?

Ed: Yes, but it was not with college people. It was old relationships that I had from high school because my crowd from high school never went on to college. I never got integrated into any kind of social life in college. I had a few dates, but not much. Up to the last year. Then I began to have a good time, I mean a social life.

Ken: Was it tied up with the left wing movement in any way?

Ed: No, Not really.

Ken: Did you go to any meetings other than those few sparse meetings?

Ed: I will have to think about it. Nothing comes to mind at the moment. No, I think these were quite separate things. I mean my social life. Nowhere near like my sister. There were other kinds of things taking up my passion, my real passion for study.

Ken: What about your last year in college. What was it like?

Ed: Oh, I did meet intellectual people. And I dated a chap who was very liberal - the Tom Mooney School, and things like that.

Ken: What was the Tom Mooney school?

Ed: The Tom Mooney Labor School was opened up around 1935 in San Francisco.

Ken: Did you go to it too?

Ed: Oh yes, I took courses there.

Ken: While you were going to college?

Ed: No, this was after I had started to work. I ran around with this one fellow. We were pretty fond of each other. He was going on to medical school. We dated even after I got out of school. I had a good senior week - you know the whole business of senior week. I certainly had nothing to do the day of my graduation.

Ken: What did you discuss with this medical student?

Ed: We had the same life view. You are talking about radicalization. Actually I think it was just an idea of an idealism. And there was so much ferment and change and so much possibility of real change. We know, in retrospect, what happened as far as even the failure of the election of Sinclair and his campaign in California. He was so close to winning. And then the whole New Deal and Roosevelt's New Deal and all those things. And even the National Recovery Association and the idea you would have labor-management and participation of labor. And this vast organization under the Wagner Act which passed at that time. The whole thing seemed so pregnant with possibilities that maybe the new day was coming.

Ken: You changed your thinking about what you wanted to do about mid term in college. What did you finally determine you wanted to do?

Ed: Industrial relations. If there had been any money I know I would have loved to have gone into law. There again (I didn't even think about it) the mere fact that my father had wanted law, was a great talker, and he wanted law. Law seemed to me the possible thing. But when you have just an A.B. degree in something like labor economics, and the labor market being what it was, a choice was academic. It was not real.

Ken: You just didn't have the money, or the ability to carry on through a Masters?

Ed: No way. The only thing I really feel very strongly about - I don't believe we went to college in those days to earn more money, or to get a better job. It was the education, the liberal education, the higher education. That was the end of the thing. It wasn't journalism. It wasn't surely the possibility of law, which I would have liked.

Ed: I never wanted to be a teacher. Why didn't I want to be a teacher? My mother would have loved to be a school teacher. That was where women were then. But I got so excited. First we see this little bit of women in personnel administration. But then personnel administration got tougher and tougher as far as industrial relations was concerned. One had no idea where one would go with a major in labor economics. It was just the joy of knowing. Then you took any kind of a job. You had to eat. That's all.

Ken: What about your graduation. Did your family get excited about it?

Ed: Oh yes. They were extremely excited.

Ken: Did you march up in cap and gown?

Ed: My, yes.

Ken: Did you have a party afterwards?

Ed: No.

Ken: What did you do after you graduated?

Ed: It was a great anti-climax. You mean the very day?

Ken: Was it a traumatic thing? Did you feel part of your life had come to an end? What happened?

Ed: I honestly don't remember. I know I had a sense of anti-climax that the whole thing was over. My family was there. I guess my mother and my father, my sister, and my aunt, and that was probably it. But I do remember that I felt kind of badly. I can see us climbing into the old 28 Chevy (Chevrolet), and I had no date. And nothing special happened in the way of a celebration. That was it.

There was one great thing though. And that was - like all the other graduating seniors I had put my application in for a job through the placement service. And due to the fact that I had carried a light load during the last year because I had taken a summer course, I took statistics, which was a tough four unit course. And I got an A in statistics. So I got a phone call before graduation day. The graduation was on Saturday. I went up to the personnel office and I got a call that said, "Are you the person who got the A in statistics?" And I said, "Yes." And they said, "Well, we have a job for you." To be one of the few people who got out of college in May of 1933 with your diploma in your hand, and start to work on Monday, was really quite unusual.

Ken: Where did you start to work?

Ed: The Works Project Administration Area Statistical Office.

Ken: Tell me a little bit about your first job.

Ed: The Works Project Administration Area Statistical Office was established in order to gather the statistics on what were the occupations of unemployed people, preparatory to setting up Works Progress Administration projects. My job there was to be statistical clerk.

One of the things that I became immediately aware of was that there were principally men who had been in very, very high positions in insurance, in banks, in whatever, who were assigned to this office. And the salary was something like \$110. But they were grateful for this kind of work. And the awareness that I, as a young college graduate working in this kind of setting along with so many unemployed men - I can remember the impact of that on me.

Within a few months I was assigned to be a supervisor. Maybe it was because of my statistics. I have no idea. But I remember I was struck by the irony of being this young twenty one year old gal supposedly supervising older men (they weren't old men, but they were older men) who had had all kinds of work experience.

Ken: How many people were under you?

Ed: I would describe this as a sort of unit - ten. Our assignment was simply to code the data that was coming in from the eleven Western States in order to inform Washington exactly what kind of work projects to set up. This, as we know, included artists, skilled workers, unskilled workers, farm laborers, the whole gamut of occupation - architects, all that vast army of unemployed that we had at that time.

Ken: How long did you stay on that job?

Ed: I was on that job for little over a year.

Ken: Did you live at home then?

Ed: Well, I lived at home for a while. Then took an apartment very close to downtown San Francisco, had an unhappy love affair, and moved back home to Oakland, to my family.

In an effort to pick up the pieces from heartbreak, I took up little theatre and dramatics. We put on plays such as Triple AAA Flowed Under.

Ken: How did you meet the people in this group?

Ed: I am a little hazy about this, but there was some Berkeley nucleus. As far as the job was concerned, it was simply a job. I didn't have any thoughts of any organization that I belonged to at that time.

Ken: These friends were old or new friends?

Ed: They were all new friends. It was a very social life. As I recall mentioning, the college was kind of an arid social life. With the matter of working in San Francisco, and with a very hectic social life, it took a good deal of my time and energy and emotion. When the love affair collapsed the whole world collapsed. I quit the job. It seemed to me to be the only way to avoid the continued contact with the late object of my affections. At that time there was a man in the neighborhood where my family lived, where I was again living at that point. He had a position with the telephone company. And I guess my father, or somebody, spoke to him. At any rate, I was employed by the telephone company.

Ken: What year was this?

Ed: 1936. And the very first job was typing up all the employee applications for social security which was going to begin to be deducted from wages. That was very temporary.

Then a group of us, who were very young and were about a year or so out of college, were brought into the sales department of the telephone company. Their ten-year forecast did not take into account the duration of the depression. So they decided to compensate by putting on a sales program. They hired a lot of women who were doing selling over the telephone. And there were a few men in the sales department. They were involved in what they called "outside sales" because these were big installations that they would put into a plant or a large business.

It was at that time, I think, that I became much more active in the little theatre movement, and I am sorry that I don't remember the name, or what organization it was. I have pictures of some of the things we did.

There were men, an outside salesman and I, and we were very much interested in forming a union in the telephone company. At times it meant a combination of romance and unionism. This was one of them, I guess. I was on that job for about a year. We talked mainly about trying to organize a union. I was in favor of unions. What I witnessed at the telephone company was instead of

Ed: a raise (our salaries were extremely low)-I think \$15.00 a week - at least we had a job)- but there again I was extremely aware of the fact that we would be called into a staff meeting and there would be a picture of what was then the president of Pacific Telephone and Telegraph on the wall; and they would make an explanation to us of why they couldn't pay us a little Xmas bonus, or more wages, or whatever. It was almost drip, drip, drip of inputs and outrage about the situation of working people and their powerlessness to do anything about it. And the lesson of the Wagner-Peyser Act - the Wagner Act is the one that set up the national system of public employment offices. And there was the National Labor Relations Act. It was as though, when we were brought into these staff meetings and told why we couldn't make more money or why we were so badly paid, you had the feeling you were supposed to bow down to the president of the telephone company. I could remember this very sentiment of irritation. It annoyed me.

I really didn't make any moves toward organizing or anything of that nature. I talked, and that was about all. We were against a fair giant at that time.

Ken: Were other people interested though?

Ed: Yes. Other people were interested. But we were a pretty small group.

One of the nights that I was going to a rehearsal of a play in Berkeley I met somebody who said, "Are you going to take the civil service examination for the employment service?" As I said, the Wagner Peyser Act set up the system of national employment services and unemployment insurance offices. Paying of unemployment insurance was going to begin in 1938. I took the examination and passed it. And, at that point, I quit the telephone company.

In that year I was with them they tried very hard to make me happy, I must say. I had about five different jobs. The last one was in the chief special agent's office, in San Francisco, as sort of a clerk receptionist. I moved over to San Francisco again when I went to work in San Francisco for the telephone company.

In the chief special agents office they were very much concerned with sabotage, and investigations, and this sort of thing. One of the colleagues of my boss, another special agent, turned out to be working for the American Legion. I, in the meantime, had moved up to ~~Telegraph~~ Hill, working for the

Telegraph

Ed: telephone company, and this special agent became my social friend. He would quite often let onto the sort of activity he was involved in, whether it was (I guess it wouldn't be called bugging at that time) tapping telephones - and he was up in some hotel in Portland and in a room near Harry Bridges. The American Legion was in pursuit of Harry Bridges at that time. It was very interesting. I didn't know whether he was watching me or I was watching him.

Ken: What reason would he have to watch you at this time?

Ed: Sometime around here I changed jobs. I went to work for the State Employment Service, as a matter of fact, in the fall of 1937. But I had a great number of rather radical friends at that time.

Ken: How did you meet them?

Ed: Well, Telegraph Hill itself - that was the center of Bohemianism.

Ken: Did you lead a Bohemian life?

Ed: A somewhat bohemian life, but sort of straight bohemian. I never fancied myself as an artist, or anything of that kind.

But there was the matter of the threat of war. You know - as Hitler began to move. As a matter of fact in all those years there was just a growing awareness that there may be a world war. And I just don't know how I met these people - to avoid a cataclysm. Oh, I was very radical at that point, but had not joined an organization.

Ken: I was thinking. There was a lot of repression, repressive legislation at that period, or did that come a little later. I mean the Hatch act, or where you had to sign things if you worked for the State.

Ed: Not then.

Ken: That was later then?

Ed: Yes. I think that legislation was during or after the war. We were involved in Yankee Stay Home. Then there was the Spanish Civil War. People I knew were in Spain.

I made a request for a transfer to Southern California. I went to work in the State Employment Office in North Hollywood. There was a State Emergency Relief Administration Office in that small town in San Fernando Valley. The workers there,

- Ed: the social workers with whom I became acquainted, were all fairly radical in their points of view. We would go to meetings and rallies. We belonged to the usual organizations - the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the Russian American Institute (the one that was on the Attorney General's list). I would go to their meetings and to their parties and so forth. That was really a contained world.
- Ken: What kind of an organization was the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade?
- Ed: The International Brigade was organized in 1936, and the United States contingent was the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. But I wasn't tied into it until 1938 or 1939.
- Ken: What did they raise money for?
- Ed: For the International Brigade, for supplies. I guess in opposition to the embargo, the Roosevelt embargo - not helping either side.
- Ken: How long did you stay in Los Angeles?
- Ed: A little over a year. And it was pretty much the same down there. I mean 1938-1939. I had a little one-man office that I ran - unemployment insurance and a few jobs that might be available, and domestic work pretty much out in the valley.
- Ken: Why did you decide to leave?
- Ed: I didn't really care for life in Los Angeles so terribly much. So I requested a transfer and came back to San Francisco in 1939. Again, down there I met a man who had been in Spain. He had been a commercial pilot. Then I remember the CIO was going strong, and we would go to rallies there.
- Ken: Before you left for Los Angeles, you said you lived on Telegraph Hill. I am a little interested in what was life like during that period. How much rent did you pay? Did you live with somebody, and so on?
- Ed: I lived with a girl friend, and we had a two bedroom, large family kitchen, and small sitting room that had a magnificent view of the whole bay. It was on Calhoun Street, near Union, looking over towards Yerba Buena. We paid at first \$15.00 a month for that place. And we had a landlord nearby. I can remember a funny thing. He would make wine. I guess the one fall we were there he would give us this unripe Zinfandel wine which you couldn't possibly drink, and couldn't use up as vinegar. So we poured

Ed: it carefully down the drain. There was a little dance hall with Saturday night dances on Calhoun just below our place.

I'll wind this up. Living on Telegraph Hill was very much of a high, just to be with all these Bohemians and artists and activists and that sort of thing. Occasionally, again during that period, I had been invited to communist meetings, but I never joined. I even met up with some people I had known in college at these affairs in the North Beach area, but never joined. My activities were pretty much limited to supporting financially or attending money raising affairs of many organizations. Soviet American friendship, or developing friendship, seemed to make this acceptable - not only acceptable, but I think consonant with my point of view.

I returned up here in 1939. I had met a gal down there from the Bay Area. When we returned we took an apartment together - a large unfurnished apartment in San Francisco on Clay Street near Polk.

The war, of course, was coming closer and - I am trying to recall my work down at the State Employment Service then. I was in the Industrial Department most of the time as an interviewer for job placement and acceptance of claims for unemployment insurance. And then received an offer to go into the Junior Division, which was considered to be a plum. The best young people around the place were selected to go into this.

The point of my mentioning that I was interviewing in the industrial department is to indicate that this, in a way, was responsible for my becoming knowledgeable about many, many more trade unions in the trade union movement, and many, many more occupations and what was required of them. Though this wasn't the emphasis when I was transferred to the junior division, the matter of counseling did, of course, enter in there. It just so happened that then the war did break out.

Just about concurrently there was a nucleus of people down at the Unemployment Office who became interested in forming and organizing a union. So we began to organize a chapter, a local of the State, County and Municipal Workers Union of America. We were checkmated by an attorney who did hearings for the Department who said, "Well, we should give everybody a choice," and he started an organization, a group, for affiliation with the American Federation of Labor Office Workers. So it ended up by us being very much divided. It was really a divisive move. What happened was that neither organization got very far off the ground.

Ken: The State, County and Municipal was CIO?

Ed: Yes.

Ken: How did you go about organizing?

Ed: We would call meetings and talk about union now, pointing out that we had a right to do it under the National Labor Relations Act. But the skullduggery of this other man -you could see clearly. It was a move to pull the rug out from any effective organization, and that is exactly what happened.

As the men began to go into service and be drafted, or volunteer at that time, we found ourselves with big ship building programs under lend-lease, and were unable to fill many jobs because of a manpower shortage in all the armaments and war industries. They began to look for women to fill these jobs, and it was from the junior division that we would take the young girls from high school and put them into so many of the production jobs. It was always a problem to establish what their wage scales were going to be. And it was a slow awakening that there were some differentials between what the men got and what the women got. So I made a survey of all the unions that were involved in war industry. Most had set up hiring halls due to the general growth of the trade union movement in the late thirties and early forties. So it was a matter of going around to officers and business agents and building up A Trade Union Directory for Women, which was done and used as a reference in the whole Department of Employment in the area. I had released time to devote myself full time to it as the Employment Service though it was needed.

Ken: Did you have any trouble. Give me some of your experiences.

Ed: I don't remember any trouble.

Ken: Tell me how you went about compiling the information.

Ed: I designed a format or schedule for information.- The name of the union, the local number, initiation fees, how these could be paid, and then the monthly dues. I thought I had a copy of the trade union directory, but I don't. I would like to make an estimate of how many union locals there were. But it was principally, I think, in San Francisco unless there was a local union that had jurisdiction over more than just the county. I would use the example of the Operating Engineers, but there were no women in it. There were a number of unions who had jurisdictions larger than San Francisco.

Ken: There was a disparity in wage?

Ed: I mentioned this. We noticed it was markedly low, and that is why we had to make this survey. This was one of the justifications. There were other details. The Department of Employment had many, many copies mimeographed and distributed.

Ken: How was it used?

Ed: When you were interviewing a person for work. There again it was just principally women, older women as well as the young girls just coming out of high school. We did recruiting of women to fill the jobs as a matter of fact. We would have Saturday meetings and get women to come. I remember one at a school before I even went over to the War Manpower Office, and at the Young Women's Christian Association, to describe working conditions and the whole business of women at work as far as the whole war was concerned.

Ken: How did you call these meetings to get people to come?

Ed: Well, the whole matter of ^{women} ~~room~~ in industry began to take place at many levels. I think the Women's Bureau, the YWCA, public or private community organizations, and the State Employment Service would sponsor meetings. And we would collaborate with the YWCA, or the Department of Labor Regional Office, to try and get women in all the jobs, whether it was shipyards, production workers, sheet metal workers, you name it, warehouse, and the rest.

Ken: Did you put out leaflets, or send letters?

Ed: Newspaper announcements and word of mouth. There were notices posted in the YWCA office. Girls would be coming into town and they would go to the Y to stay. It was pretty much of a center.

We were very active. We would put on training programs on unionism and women in industry within the Department of Employment of new employment interviewers. Then when the war really got into low gear in 1942 the whole government was organized to all out effort establishing the Office of Price Administration, War Manpower Commission, War Labor Board, War Production Board which were set up nationally and regionally. I can't remember all of them.

Ed:

At any rate, I was quite surprised to be called down to the Regional War Manpower Office. They were setting up a system of priorities of referral of workers because there were so many union hiring halls. Referral to jobs was done through the union halls. The process was to join the union. Then you got referred to the job. This is a point I should have made earlier. The unions had pretty much control of hiring. This is what necessitated the Trade Union Directory. There were so many hiring halls. The employment referred to the union hiring hall, not directly to the employer.

The Director of the War Manpower Commission asked whether I would be interested in being what they referred to as Trade Union Liaison Officer. The War Manpower Commission itself consisted actually of members of the community who would set up the priorities of referral - where workers should be sent. This meant that you had to convince the union officials to follow priorities. At that point Number One was the Manhattan Project in Washington State, the development of the atomic bomb, which was a secret to us all at the time. Seldom were we able to refer to number one priority I am sure. Then number two would be Bethlehem Shipyard. All shipyards would have a weight of two - Bethlehem, Kaiser, and Marin, and Kaiser in Richmond, Mare Island, Hunters Point.

If somebody was looking for work, the first place to send him or her would be to the Manhattan Project. That was all over the country. Number two would be all the shipyards. Number three would be Bethlehem Steel. These were the priorities. No priority at all would be the Metropolitan Life Insurance housing out at Stonestown. But very often that is where the men wanted to go, particularly the building trades.

The War Manpower Commission didn't want to use any police powers. They didn't want to fine. They didn't want to have sanctions, although actually by law, by the regulations, they had the right to. But the feeling, I guess the preciousness of the hiring hall, the whole concept of labor-management - in other words, cooperation in the war effort, made them decide they didn't feel they should use punishment and sanctions to enforce hiring hall to observe strictly the order of priorities.

Ken:

You mean the War Manpower Commission?

Ed: The war manpower commission did not want to use any sanctions in order to enforce dispatchers, or whoever was responsible for dispatching workers, to send them according to high priority, where the workers were needed. Am I making this clear?

Ken: Yes.

Ed: And so the idea was to attempt to use persuasion, patriotism, the war cause, the tyranny of fascism, and so forth, to observe priorities.

Ken: Was this effective?

Ed: Moderately so. I think probably the most difficult were the building trades. Actually the metal trades unions really were as large and influential because of the war itself. There is no place you can send a boilermaker, really, except to a shipyard. There is no place you can send a pipefitter or stagerigger or piledriver, etc. It was logical that they tended to follow the priorities. They did want people, because they brought up a lot of people from the South. But the business agent would not insist the person move. So there was quite a bit of free choice. The penalty, if I recall, was supposed to go against the worker. It seems to me if he refused a priority supposedly he would sacrifice his unemployment insurance. The only way that could be done, because that's where they went to have their unemployment insurance check, as it is today, the hiring hall really would bring pressure to bear, and often did.

Ken: And your job was -

Ed: To continue to maintain this pressure on union officials. But often the pressure on the part of the members was to do it their own way. Metropolitan housing paid well, and it was close to home, and they would just as soon go out there. These officials were elected, and they were kind of between the devil and the deep blue sea - between their membership and the War Manpower Committee's war effort.

Ken: What about the women in the industry. Did you have any specific relationship with women in the industry?

Ed: Not at that time. The matter of women in industry per se had been previously. Women were already in industry, and several large locals were predominantly women production workers - a machinists local.

Ken: Did they accept women into the unions, or did they make separate units?

Ed: If I remember correctly, both ways. The facts of this I am hazy on. They were certainly separate and not equal in many, many instances. For example, I don't recall offhand whether a woman welder got as much as a man welder. I really don't remember this. This is why I am so damn sorry I can't find that book. But the matter of women per se in industry was set aside, because women did go into industry. I think generally there was really quite separate, not quite an auxiliary, but certainly the pay was not equal. I am not even quite sure the initiations were equal. There was a whole parallel system set up, in general.

Ken: Your job was out of the office most of the time, and into the field?

Ed: In the office and into the field. Oh, the other thing was to try to get statistics from them. It was a matter of trying to demonstrate the accountability of the program - that the system of priorities was being followed. It was a matter of trying to get the unions to send statistics. I would go pick them up. I would provide them with the forms. The other thing would be to see that each local got the priorities that the commission had established for that week. The Commission would meet once a week and establish priorities. There would be the matter of getting the priorities listings mailed to all the local unions. I had an assistant and a secretary. We would get information out to them. We would keep them supplied. We would write up (I wouldn't call it a newsletter) a communication. The liason was maintained in writing as well as in personal contact. Or I would meet with a group of metal trades. The Regional Office covered nine counties in the Bay Area, clear up to Napa and over to Contra Costa. All the local unions in all nine counties were my territory.

Ken: The structure of the War Manpower Commission was that you were one of the officials then?

Ed: No. We in the War Manpower Commission became kind of enthusiastic about the concept of labor-management committees being set up in industry at that time as a vehicle towards "getting the job done."

Ken: What was your relationship with men in some of these unions. Can you elaborate a little bit on what unions and what relations you had with the officials?

Ed: I can't elaborate on which unions. But I can give you some generalizations, including the metal trades and the building trades, because often it was involved with such a group as overall building trades in order to get them to influence their

Ed: affiliated locals, to bring pressure to bear. So I worked, let us say, with the secretary of a union in all the areas. Surprisingly enough there was acceptance. I clearly knew what I was talking about. I could talk unionism. I could speak with real sincerity in my attitude toward unionism. My feeling about trade unionism comes through. For their part, I think that they had gotten used to, in part, women doing many kinds of things they hadn't done before. And I was respected, I think, for my knowledge of unionism and pro union sentiment. I received several letters while I was still there, as a matter of fact, of commendation from a business agent or an officer of a union. (I know I have the letters, and am sorry I lost the Directory book). They would call me and get an answer or explanation because it was my business to keep them going along with the whole priorities program. So that's about all I can say.

You had asked whether, from an administrative standpoint, I would be an officer. That was the title, Labor Liason Officer. Actually there was the Director and several assistants, and a number of staff for the whole Commission. There was publicity and news releases. Then there was the actual citizens commission. The rest of the organization was to carry out the decisions of the Commission.

Ken: Were there women on this citizens Commission.

Ed: No. I think they were industry-management people.

Ken: You mentioned unions and labor management. We can go into this, maybe, on the next tape. And the organization of the union in the War Manpower Commission.

Ed: OK.

Ken: After reading your last interview, there are some questions we didn't take up as far as women in industry were concerned. I didn't ask you this question - Did you know any women in industry?

Ed: Before the war there weren't many women in industry. Personnel departments were principally staffed by males. However, some of the larger establishments were attempting to bring women in, particularly the industrial relations and personnel departments.

As a matter of fact, I received a call myself to apply for a position that was open in the personnel department of Mare Island Shipyards. They found out that when they had large crews of women on their payrolls and in their plants, that they encountered many kinds of situations that they had

- Ed: not faced when they were employing just men. These related to matters of child care, one parent family (if the father was away to war) and that sort of thing. I was offered that position. As a matter of fact they were going to take on about three people as personnel counselors. It was an extremely attractive type of activity, but I was satisfied with what I was doing. The whole matter of the work being up at Mare Island and commuting didn't appeal to me. I turned it down. But that was a trend, I think, at the time - that sometimes in dealing with working women you had different sets of problems, oftentimes, than you did with men.
- Ken: The employers recognized this. Did the unions recognize this?
- Ed: In the case of Mare Island there was no particular union. It was an open shop. In the case of unions, so far as the rest of the war industries were concerned, I don't believe the unions particularly recognized it. I have a faint memory that this trend of the corporations, the large employer being sure there were people in the personnel department, women, who could understand the kind of problems that women faced in employment, single parents at that time, and night work, and many, many kinds of problems - the Dear John letters, and the reverse, and so on and so forth - all these kinds of problems. Those problems in war time in trying to deal with life alone, which they had to do all those years.
- Ken: Do you know what they did about it?
- Ed: No. I think that principally it was a trend. I had mentioned previously that I had pretty much gotten away from the women in industry and was more into the trade union situation.
- Ken: There is just one more question I want to ask. Do you know if there was any sentiment among the women for equal pay? Was there any resentment because they didn't get equal pay? Did they accept their secondary status?
- Ed: Most emphatically. I don't think there was any awareness then of implications in differentials in pay. I don't think anyone particularly gave it much thought. I think historically women had always gotten less. I think the emotional situation at that time was such on the part of women that this would be the last thing that many women probably would think of.

Ken: Do you think they probably didn't know they were getting less pay?

Ed: I think this probably may have surfaced from time to time.

Ken: Did you become acquainted with any of the women doing this work in big organizations?

Ed: No. Not with these people. It was directly with the unions.

Ken: Let's go on to the organization of the union in the War Manpower Commission then.

Ed: There were both men and women in the Regional War Manpower Commission office that seemed to be interested in the affiliation with a union. And there was quite a drive by the United Federal Workers to unionize people in some of these new or expanded agencies, governmental agencies.

Ken: Why were they interested in a union?

Ed: I don't believe all of them were. But there were enough that seemed to come together at that point. The whole role of labor-management, and the fact that labor-management committees were models on the outside, and the whole idea, the War Labor Board, the War Manpower Commission, and all that sort of thing- there was a whole effort in industry to establish labor-management committees. This was promoted almost by the government. It seemed somewhat logical to a sufficient number of people that this could be something that they could apply to their own situation.

Ken: How did you go about organizing the union?

Ed: It wasn't me going about organizing the union. I think there was a group of us, and we simply joined the Federal Workers Local, the United Federal Workers. And we found people in all the other war related agencies and commissions, whether it was the War Labor Board, the Office of Price Administration, many others. I think the people that were possibly, in many instances, taken into these government agencies were probably those whose heads stood out above the crowd from whatever situation they came from. They may have been organizers, or they may have been joining unions, or other things. Often the people who were involved in unions, either with the State Departments of Employment and such, very often were the people who passed the competitive

Ed: examinations quite high so they got promotions and got into middle level management (middle level executive we call it now) positions - supervisors, etc. The office manager I had in the Department of Employment said, "I've noticed, Mildred, that so often people who are in the unions are always the ones who pass the examinations very highly, and pass the oral examinations." Which, of course, always led me to believe there was no reason not to stick your neck out. I was never penalized.

Ken: Did the majority of people in the War Manpower Commission join the union?

Ed: No. I don't think the majority in any of the agencies did. But there were enough (I forget most of the details) - there were sufficient for us to be able to organize a labor-management committee.

I don't believe allof our activities were exactly world shaking. But one of the things we took great exception to and managed to get changed was when there was a new position, if a new position was created, they must inform the people already working there that this position was open. I was on the labor-management committee and I can remember several meetings. But for the life of me I can't remember much except for this one particular thing. I know there were many, many others - a number of other issues we felt we should have a say on.

Ken: How did the union function? Did you have meetings?

Ed: Yes. We had union meetings. In other words, the union drew its membership from all the federal offices around.

Ken: Did the people who joined the union in your group go to the union meetings?

Ed: Yes, these were active people. I don't think there were too many that just joined.

Ken: What was taken up at these meetings?

Ed: That's what I said - the issues elude me totally. I haven't the slightest memory. The only thing I remember is that we would have access to all jobs, promotional opportunities, sidewise, upward, or whatever.

Ken: Tell me about the labor-management committees. What were they? Who instigated them in the first place?

Ed: The union instigated them. There was resistance, I am sure - the usual quarrels, discussions, differences of opinions as to the rights of management to make the decisions and the rights of labor to participate in the decision making process. It was to participate in some decision making aspects, which probably ran the gamut of all kinds of things from working conditions and hours and compensatory time off methods. We did work forty-eight hours a week. We covered holidays and everything else - issues of working conditions.

Ken: This was within the War Manpower Commission? How did labor-management get initiated in the first place?

Ed: The idea of labor-management committees occurred outside of government. It was being members of the union we brought the concept into government. It was a little surprising to the government as an employer that we should carry out the same kinds of activities that large scale industry carried out. In other words, the actual law or regulation (and I don't remember which it was) was the formation of labor-management committees in all the major war industries.

Ken: How did labor-management get started in industry in the first place?

Ed: The government encouraged it. I don't know whether it was by law, or whatever, or a regulation.

Ken: What was the purpose of it?

Ed: The purpose was to try and see that there weren't work stoppages and that the war effort would go on without strikes and work stoppages.

Ken: How were they established? Who was on them?

Ed: That may have been under the aegis of the War Labor Board. The War Labor Board had different kinds of functions, and I'm not familiar with them. Labor-management committees were established by the election of union representatives.

Ken: How long did you stay with the War Manpower Commission?

Ed: Until the middle of 1945. I was pregnant at that time. It was necessary to quit about the last three or four months of pregnancy.

Ken: That was before the end of the war then?

Ed: Yes. Just a few months before the end of the war.

Ken: There are some questions I want to ask in relation to the end of the war, and I don't know whether you feel you want to answer them or not. Do you know anything about what happened to women in industry when the war ended?

Ed: I don't think there was anything sudden. But I think over a period of several years hard times began to hit, and veterans came back. The big campaign, understandably, was veterans had claims on jobs and they were, by law, given the right to their former jobs. Gradually the men replaced the women on the jobs. There was the fact that there was a great curtailment in the number of jobs. The whole shipbuilding industry, all the war industries - the bottom just fell out. So it was attrition. They were often young people. The men who went to war were young. So many of the women had deferred motherhood and decided to take a crack at it, or wanted to.

Ken: Were the women in the unions full members? Did they drop out, or did they retain their membership? Was there a dual membership?

Ed: There was not a significant change about pay. It was never equalized. I think I made a reference previously. They were always separate, never quite an auxiliary, but never a full integrated membership.

Ken: Actually when they dropped out, they didn't stay in the unions?

Ed: They just didn't stay in the unions.

Ken: Do you know about whether any of them objected to that, or not?

Ed: No. I have no idea.

Ken: I know you mentioned this before, but I want a recapitulation of what you think the role of women was during the war years, in industry.

Ed: I would think, in the first place, because they had a secondary role, they did not assume leadership role, where the main purpose of their life really became their work. There were probably a few exceptions to that, but not many. The younger women had postponed

Ed: parenthood. When their husbands, or boy friends, or fiances came back from the war they were very pleased and eager probably to undertake parenthood. There was a big baby boom after that. Possibly among the older women, they were happy to have the men take their jobs over. They understood the problem. I never made a study, and I would make a guess that the age of women in war industry (and probably no study was ever done of this) but I would bet it would be very young, childless women, or older women with their children well along in years. I don't know whether I really recognized this at the time, but as far as I have read, there was a great media push after the war, in both subtle and not so subtle ways, for women to get back "into the home" once more, and be dependent. Everyone was very tired of everything they had done before, and it was rigorous work for women - forty eight hour weeks. Child care facilities were very limited, and it was no easy thing for many women to work. Along this line, I definitely looked forward to having a child, being a homemaker, and staying home which I had never done had the opportunity of doing in my life. I was really eager to do it.

Ken: So you did have a child and did stay home. You said you were active politically.

Ed: Moderately active politically.

Ken: Let me ask this - you had a child just before the war ended?

Ed: No. After - in October.

Ken: What did you do then, after you had her?

Ed: We had moved to Oakland and, as I said, I enjoyed the whole business. Hard times hit, and a strike on the waterfront. So I did have to begin to look for temporary work. I had a couple of temporary jobs at that point. Really very soon, in 1946-47. I went to work for the Veteran's Counseling Center at the University of California, and I was the occupational information specialist.

Ken: How did you get the job?

Ed: Through a friend who ran that program. Also because of my knowledge of occupations acquired through the years and with the Employment Service and the War Manpower Commission.

Another job I got at that time out of the sheerest kind of necessity was with the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council in Alameda County which had set up an office to support the candidacy of Buell Gallagher

Ed: who was running for Congress. He was with the Pacific School of Religion, I believe it was, and a well-known local liberal. I don't believe he was elected. Later he became the president of the City College of New York. The Alameda County AFL was sponsoring his campaign, and they had an office in Oakland from which we dispensed the precinct workers. I was the only person in the office, and the AFL-CIO paid a salary - paid a modest wage, I should say. And I obtained that job by going down to the union, the Central Labor Council, and that turned up. It was the best they could do for me at the time. But as I was considered a friend of the labor movement they gave what little help they could in my own situation.

Certain kinds of political action arose during that four or five year immediate post war period. There was a great deal of unrest - the beginning of the McCarthy era, for example. I can remember two political activities. One was for a full slate of City Councilmen for the City of Oakland. That was very much of a grass roots movement. Actually this organization managed to get elected an extremely liberal majority in the City Council of Oakland.

Ken: Did the McCarthy period affect you personally in any way?

Ed: Only in a strange way. One person who had been president of the union called me, as a former treasurer, regarding one of the people we had known in the Employment Service. This particular employee had gone to work for the United States Civil Service Commission. He was doing character investigations in the Personnel Department, including security checks for the Federal Civil Service Commission. Someone had fingered him as subversive, and he was suspended from his job. And the ironical point of this was that he had never been interested even in joining the union, let alone being a radical. But he lost his job. He worked as a gardner to eke out an existence. At that point he was the father of a couple of kids. So it never affected me directly - only in an indirect way. I looked all over for records to try and prove he wasn't a member of the union, and that he never paid any dues. I didn't testify in that. The president of the union was called to testify to the fact that he had never even been a member of the union, was never even interested in joining the union, which put him beyond the pale as far as we were concerned, being chicken hearted.

Ken: I guess that brings up the theory that a lot of people had, that people who had antagonisms against other people used this period.

Ed: Absolutely. You never knew your accusers. I knew a few people who had that happen to them, but I personally knew only that.

Ken: Were you working for the government during this time?

Ed: In 1949 I went back on a temporary appointment with the State Department of Employment, and on one ever failed to give me security clearance. Nobody fingered me. Nobody had anything against me. It is ironical - not that they could have, but there were some people that were indifferent to any kind of activity, even on the level of union work, and they got it.

Ken: When did you finally decide to take a full time job?

Ed: As soon as I could get one. That would be around 1949 or 1950. At that time the decision was reached that divorce could be the only course of action. It wasn't a particularly good time in the labor market, but I took any number of civil service examinations, State and Federal, and I can't remember all the private outfits too. I know that we were so hard up that I had to borrow caste off clothing because I didn't have any clothes to wear for job interviews.

Among the crisis, of course, was very bad ulcers. At any rate, I took a number of civil service jobs ranging from wage and hour inspector for the Department of Labor, federal government, and workmen's compensation claims adjuster, Industrial Welfare Commission.

Someone suggested the Vocational Rehabilitation Service. It had been pointed out somewhere along the line that there weren't too many women in it, and I was very much interested in the job that paid the most money that I could get the fastest. Though I passed examinations at various degrees of eligibility, vocational rehabilitation turned up, and my score was extremely high on that - something like 95% on the written. They had a Qualifications Appraisal Board, an Oral Examining Board. I wasn't sure this was the work I wanted to do. I had some doubts about my capacity to deal with disabled people. My capacity to counsel was not a matter of concern to me. I had taken several graduate courses, and had experience with the Employment Service. I took a graduate course in public personnel administration and in vocational counseling at U.C. I learned, when I had been turned down on the oral interview (they had three people on the

- Ed: oral interview) - the director of the department, and a man from the personnel office, the State Personnel Board. They asked many questions, many of which are prohibited to be asked, are forbidden to be asked today.
- Ken: Like what?
- Ed: You know - what am I going to do about child care. A whole bunch of sexist questions. Many sexist questions.
- Ken: Do you remember any of them outside of the child care one?
- Ed: I don't remember any specifically. I suspect they might have asked whether I could work with men, and so forth.

I had become acquainted with a few people at this time who knew the vocational rehabilitation agency. Some pointed out that there were only about two or three women in the whole department of rehabilitation. They had begun to hire people and expand the program because of legislation which expanded the service because there was a great interest in rehabilitation - in the post war period. Services provided by law were greatly expanded in 1945. They began casting around trying to recruit people. As I said, there were only two or three women in the whole state of California among several hundred in the department. So, when I went below the passing grade, was given a less than passing grade on the oral qualifications (they call this the Qualifications Appraisal Board where they look at your work history) - I had a friend who said "you simply have to appeal the decision. It is clearly a sexist decision. They discriminate against women." There weren't any women to speak of, maybe one or two secretaries who have been superannuated. There were a few loopholes in the civil service law, I guess. So I very reluctantly said I would do this. I requested an appeal. They go through the transcribed interview. I said they had misinterpreted my qualifications. I think I couldn't place too much emphasis on the fact that it had been a matter of sex discrimination though there was. It wasn't against the law then. They did ask about child care. In fact Emily Huntington, who was a very eminent woman in U.C. (I had wanted to to research for her) - that was one of the jobs I tried to get - she said that after her experience in the war she didn't want any woman with small children, "I just won't hire them."

Ken: So then what happened?

Ed: I decided I would appeal just the same. You could bring in an attorney if you wanted to. I decided I would do the case myself. So I mustered a rather impassioned case. The hearing is held

Ed: before the State Personnel Board which is the real deciding body. And I knew someone -it was an acquaintance I met in connection with my vocational counseling course. He was an academician, and he was well aware that there had been sex discrimination in the Department of Rehabilitation. So he, among the five members (I believe it was five members) of the State Personnel Board, began the questioning, interrogating me. I made my statement and my interpretation of my work experience, maintaining it did qualify me for the job. He began right off to lead the questioning as to whether it was my opinion that there was probably sex discrimination, or discrimination against women. I said yes, I thought there was. So it was due to his very careful questioning that he uncovered the matter of how many employees there were, or how many employees there weren't - women.

Ken: Can you tell me his name?

Ed: I would just as soon not. I suspect he is dead.

Ken: What happened then?

Ed: At any rate, it became very open. The decision was reversed. I was passed. I immediately got called for the job. They were desperate for people to go to Bakersfield, to Fresno, and all over San Francisco. So I went to work in San Francisco. Along this line, though, I really felt very much like Portia. Most people did tend to bring in lawyers. I presented my appeal myself, which makes me kind of crazy, I guess. I probably would have gotten a male lawyer, and it would have been a very different name of the game then.

More and more women began to be hired by the Agency. Other women were passed. So that was another so-called critical incident, for others as well as myself. They just couldn't get away with that any more, turning you down because of being a woman.

I took the liberty of calling my acquaintance that night and asking him what was the decision. He said it was reversed. I asked, "How often do they reverse a decision?" He said not very often because we wouldn't have a Civil Service State if the Personnel Board didn't almost always uphold the staff examination decision. He said, "You know, Mildred, this was a clear case of discrimination against women." It was really sort of precedent setting.

Ken: Do you think this may have happened in other State and Federal agencies too, when women applied for jobs? That it was probably a pattern?

Ed: Probably. Now the number of women in the Department of Rehabilitation is just about equal that of men. It was traditionally a man's job like so many others - boilermakers, carpenters, plumbers, and so on. Sex discrimination, or traditional men's jobs or women's jobs, certainly has negative aspects. There are certainly many men who really would love to have taught elementary school level, for example. But the culture said "no", that was a woman's job. So we lost the opportunity of having good men who would love to have worked with small children. We had all these women - and children deprived of models of manhood in elementary schools. It is extremely difficult when you take the "momism" books, the Philip Wylie stuff, or the poor divorcees whose children have no male models anywhere along the line in their formative years. They don't have uncles around and so forth.

Ken: That's a very interesting observation. I've never heard it before.

Ed: These divorcees have three or four children and no male schoolteachers. There are now a few gutsy men that have gotten into elementary school to teach - not be administrators, and really enjoy teaching. Imagine - a man wouldn't have a prayer in hell of trying to get a job as a kindergarten teacher yet.

Ken: In a private school maybe?

Ed: In some of the alternative schools now where they are doing some of these things, and the men have the same kind of qualities as women have as far as being a teacher. There are a lot of females who teach who should be barn makers.

Ken: Let's get some comparisons.

Ed: Between 1930 and now. I'll continue with my employment history then, and see what comes of this.

So I went to work for the Department of Rehabilitation, enjoyed it a great deal, and found that I was well equipped to do it, rather learned to do it. There was no training for rehabilitation counselors though there were beginning to be in the early 1950's - the recognition that this was a whole new field of training that was needed. It is a much different kind of thing than social work because

Ed: you are expected to know occupations, for one thing. You have to be a much more active, much more outreaching kind of human being as a rehabilitation counselor.

I remarried in 1953. It is interesting to note that my husband had a background which was - which fitted into the view of life that I had. We had very much in common in that he had gotten out of school in the very early days of the depression, and was trained as a physical education coach. He had been quite an athlete, but there was no work. So he sort of messed around the waterfront in Southern California on fishing boats and then became a business agent for the Fishermen's Union. Then, too, before the war started and during the war, he worked for the Pacific Coast Maritime Commission. Because of his knowledge of ships and the sea and that sort of thing he got a staff position.

I had a special case load in vocational rehabilitation. There are certain severely disabled individuals, paraplegics for example, and also the mentally ill. These were viewed to be the very difficult kinds of cases to work with. One of the places we were establishing relationship with was the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Center in San Francisco. They were going to receive a grant to set up a work evaluation center. Incidentally, my husband was a rehabilitation counselor. We were both just rank and file rehabilitation counselors. I had made the decision that I didn't want to be in such immediate direct competition with him. We had to keep our marriage a secret. At that time there was a civil service regulation that a man and wife couldn't be in the same agency.

Ken: Why was that?

Ed: Collusion, skullduggery. Oh, many went through this. So we had to keep our marriage a secret. It was fancy footwork there for a while.

I was very excited about being remarried and all that; was very much taken up by that prospect.

But the opportunity came to leave the agency and go to work for this Comprehensive Rehabilitation Center. I thought it was a horizontal movement. I really was not interested in promotion, or more money and heavy responsibility. I really wanted to take it easy. It wasn't that I wanted to quit work. I didn't want to be a supervisor. Never wanted to boss other people. Never chose to, and always got a job where I wouldn't have to. Rather than this being a horizontal move it turned out that I was the coordinator of this work and personal evaluation unit in this comprehensive rehabilitation center, which put me in principally an administrative and coordinating role. There were very, very heavy responsibilities - writing grants

Ed: and teaching medical students, and all sorts of things I had never gotten into before. This greatly enhanced my knowledge of the medical community and the medical world of work and activity. There again I decided I wanted to make a job change after a year and a half. So I quit and went back to school and got my masters degree in 1957.

I worked part time supervising students in their field placement, which is a different kind of supervision than boss supervision.

Ken: Your masters in what?

Ed: In rehabilitation counseling, and I continued on the faculty of San Francisco State College.

Ken: Did you find less discrimination against women in this period?

Ed: Yes. I was aware that there was discrimination against women in the whole academic scene. I didn't get particularly involved in it at that point. There were beginning to be rumblings against it. But I was working part time, and I was very busy setting up a professional organization of rehabilitation counseling. I was second state vice president of the California Rehabilitation Counseling. At any rate, I decided again I would stay home for a little while. I dropped back to two thirds work anyway.

A couple of months later I had a mastectomy. And a couple of months after that my husband was killed in an automobile accident.

After turning around in circles, travelling to Europe alone for five months, I decided I had better get back to work. I had no idea what I would do. I systematically made all kinds of contacts including taking examinations for the State Department of Rehabilitation. I wasn't keen about going back to it. There was funding for a good many things at that time in the field of rehabilitation, and I had established a very good professional reputation. So a former colleague, a physician who had been at the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Center, said a program was being set up at the University of California Medical School - ~~for research and demonstration~~ the project being funded by the Federal Rehabilitation Service. I obtained the job as the rehabilitation counselor on this research and demonstration team, and did that for about a year and a half.

Ed: I collaborated on a monograph that described the whole research project. I got in touch with the chairman of a new division of Ambulatory and Community Medicine which was being established at U.C. We are now talking about 1965. I had become very much interested in medical education because I felt that physicians needed to understand more about real life, so to speak, and the total person, which was to be an emphasis in this new division.

There were federal funds available to medical schools because of federal interest in the shift of emphasis in medical education toward the direction of more humanism, less specialization, more family practice, more community medicine, more social medicine. Rehabilitation, I felt, really worked in. I was invited to write a program for rehabilitation medicine. It was a five year grant. I was on the faculty of the medical school, coordinating and teaching undergraduate medical students. I had nothing but a masters degree, and I'm a woman, and I'm on the faculty of a medical school, which is no small accomplishment.

Ken: Did anybody ever mention it?

Ed: Oh yes. It is incredible. I had not even a Ph. D.

Ken: Was there any antagonism?

Ed: No. It was OK. I joined with a university group concerned with the role of women in academia. At about that time I was about ready to quit, but I went to a few meetings and became very interested in that subject. Due to the fact that I had decided to retire anyway, that was my last hurrah. The whole problem of women on faculty, women in medical schools, was glaring. Then there were some test cases filed at U.C. Berkeley.

Ken: What was this - a committee that was started?

Ed: Yes - On status of women, need for affirmative action.

Ken: Who started it?

Ed: The faculty women at the University of California, Berkeley. There had been gross discrimination throughout academia, and there still is. I get journals like the American Psychological association which studies about the role of women in academia, which is really deplorable. But an affirmative action program has brought about some change. They were in the traditional roles, you know, secretaries, or non-tenured faculty. They simply weren't on faculty.

Ken: What did this group accomplish?

Ed: I think it was a matter of doing studies of personnel practice, and to open up some of the areas where there was clear discrimination. I left before any programs of affirmative action were established.

Ken: Do you belong to any other women's organizations?

Ed: Since I went to San Rafael I joined the National Organization of Women. I thought I was joining the National Political Organization for Women. I joined the NOW, Marin Chapter, and became I was interested in the whole thing - I still am, in the status of women. I found that most of their programs were very dull. They seemed to be focused toward some of the problems of bringing up children, and the single mothers of Marin, and all these kinds of things. Somehow or other it wasn't on a political enough level for me. And I realized I had really gotten into the wrong organization; and I haven't turned around on that yet. It isn't that I don't intend to. The only thing I have done - the Status of Women Commission is in effect secretly appointed. The whole problem of the status of women commissions in cities and counties is under real question now - how the Boards of Supervisors of the Counties vote - rather than secret ballot. They are now trying to see what is happening. There was one summary dismissal of a woman on the commission. I am more interested in the Status of Women Commission than I am in NOW. I think that is more the level where I prefer working.

This begins a commentary on some of these things. In a community like Marin, which probably has the highest number of single parents to any comparable county in the country, there are some very special kinds of problems.

I come to the conclusion, from time to time, that women are their own worst enemies as far as the feminist movement is concerned. The question is always, in this kind of an issue, "who is enslaving whom?" I think, in many, many situations, women enslave themselves. Once in a while I even entertain the idea that I get impatient with their bellyaching. I mean they want to be great big earth mothers.

Ken: Iron women?

Ed: No. Queen bees. And they feel so terribly special because they have children. That aspect irritates me.

Ken: Do you think this is indiginous to Marin. That is, is the women's movement in that area different?

Ed: I think it may be.

Ken: Because I was going to ask you (we discussed this before) - Can you give me your general opinion of the feminist movement?

Ed: I don't have a general opinion of the movement. I have very, very mixed feelings about it. I would even say you have to kick the mule to get his attention. So some of the excesses bother me. But, in a way, I can understand. In the militancy and the lesbianism - I am totally sympathetic against this discrimination. And they should come out of the closet. But the stamp of lesbianism in some of the feminist things might be detrimental to what I think are much more central issues.

Ken: What do you think about the Equal Rights Amendment?

Ed: I am totally in favor of it.

Ken: Would you compare the role of women in the time when you were just going to work to the role of women now - what the difference is - what you feel about it?

Ed: I think both times what happens arises out of the circumstances, or what results. In the 30's, the matter of early marriage, childbearing, women working, it wasn't a self conscious thing at all. And, as I mentioned before, suprisingly enough in the thirties (and I am quite sure about this) there were more women in professional schools than there were in the fifties, say. I am speaking of medicine, law and dentistry.

Ken: What do you think the cause of this was?

Ed: Women had equal rights to education. There was a much higher proportion of women. There were a few women at Stanford, at U.C. Maybe there was a proportionate increase in the number of women attending U.C. in the thirties. Only a relatively large number. Nowhere in the majority. But a large proportion of women went to college in the thirties for the simple reason that it was probably easier for a man to go out and get any kind of a job. And there just wasn't any way for a woman to get a job. Women didn't take to the roads like men did. During the thirties they had the transient boys camps. But they didn't have transient girls' camps. Boys rode and rails and knocked about the country in a way girls never did. So probably

- Ed: a boy might just be expected to get out and hustle like hell. But the girl was still at home. And if she couldn't get a job she might just as well go to school. I know that of the few people that graduated from high school with me there were probably more girls than boys. I am talking about a dozen people. The boys were expected to go to work, and they could leave home to do it. The girls couldn't.
- Ken: This is a real loaded question, and a corny one. Would you do it any differently?
- Ed: I don't think it's corny. You mean, do I admire my life?
- Ken: Yes. Is the direction you went -
- Ed: You mean, does it hold together for me? Am I disappointed? No. It holds together for me. I'm glad I'm me.
- Ken: You wanted to be a newspaper reporter at one time. Do you feel any regret?
- Ed: Oh, that. I think I would have liked to have been an artist or a writer. That was a talent I didn't have. I would like to have been able to write.
- Ken: Do you think you realized your full potential in the course of your life (which isn't over yet, by a long shot).
- Ed: I think my potential is shot. Yes, I guess so. I think so. I don't have any regrets along that line. I can't think of a single regret. It all kind of makes sense. It was all logical. I think you could say that I do have self esteem. My only regret, and it is probably the other side of this, is that OK, maybe I could have been gentler. But I wasn't. So I accept me as me. Maybe if I had been these other things, then maybe I couldn't be what I am. I am not ready to abandon that.
- Ken: You seem to have lived a course of life which wasn't interfered with by prejudices in the main. You went ahead on your own and got better jobs than most women did in the course of this period. That interests me. Can you give any reason for it?
- Ed: The whole thing is in the narrative. It's just there. I think the influence of men in my life has always been a very powerful one. As I said, it began with my father. Why did I fall in love with men who were often mavericks? Why did I never care about men who were after bucks? So I certainly chose people that permitted me to do what I wanted.

Ed: Right now, good heavens, one can get married easily enough. And people ask this. But there aren't many men that would put up with me - the kind of person that I am. I mean the statistics of somebody who has the levels of achievement that I have - that would be comfortable with it, and then have the same political view. There are not many. Look at _____, for example. His point of view - though he thought of himself as a liberal, he isn't. I don't want to be the apple of anybody's eye. I need space.

I always had behavior which was consonant with my level of belief as far as the way of changing people's minds, or being an agent of social change within the limits of my capacity to do work.

I think it's an expression that probably has arisen (agent of social change). Maybe it's a sociological expression in effect. It's maybe a euphemism for revolt. At any rate, I became aware of it in counseling with young people who were trying to make decisions in career choices. And they were full of idealism. And you begin to think of professions or occupations where you can be an agent of social change. So I think that this comes from the professional literature as a matter of fact.

The debate often arises, has arisen a good many times, in a client deciding between being a lawyer or being a psychologist. You can see that the psychologist traditionally has been more interested in changing the person, his capacity to deal with his personal environment; whereas the lawyer has increasingly been in a position to bring about social change rather than personal change. As far as the psychological profession, they are scrutinizing whether they have been doing the right thing or not. God knows, you know, whether they have just been attempting to help people adapt to a bad world, or a less than good world. So does a psychiatrist to a certain extent. Psychologists have a much more scientific approach than psychiatrists do. They do research. Psychiatrists don't do much research.

Ken: Do you think men can be agents of social change too?

Ed: This has nothing to do with sex. In my view now, law again would probably be the most effective agent of social change, particularly now when they have class action suits and all kinds of things that can be done through law.

Ken: Well, Mildred, this is just a series of questions to wind up the interview, and they are not in any particular order. The first thing is - you said you were in favor of the Equal Rights Amendment. During World War II unions and liberal forces fought against it on the basis that it was similar to the right to work laws. Were you against it at that time, or do you remember?

Ed: I don't remember at all. I have no memory of that .

Ken: Why are you for it now?

Ed: I don't believe the existing legislation is adequate. Nor do I believe that the 14th Amendment is truly adequate. I think there has to be an explicit statement with reference to women's equal rights. I do not foresee the dangers that some people think are going to develop as the result of it. I just believe in equal rights. I think all kinds of exceptions will be made. I would just rather have it there and deal with the abuses. I think that some of the arguments that I have heard are absurd. I think one could almost decide on the basis of who is against it and who is for it - the same kind of forces that are anti abortion and anti gay, and you have a whole profile of the people who are against it. I am just not convinced of their worries about the dangers.

I am frankly in favor of some enlightenment of child labor laws. I think at the time child labor laws were passed, for example, no longer justify the resulting discrimination against young people. I think it becomes prohibitive in proscribing. I think I would like to see the risk on the other side.

Ken: Right in the middle of everything I never asked you what you thought of the dropping of the atom bomb. Do you remember what your instinctive reaction was?

Ed: A mixture of horror and relief. I think that aftershock, when the real implications of what was involved came through, I had a second and third reaction as to what was necessary - how many lives were saved because of it. And I don't think we half understood the dangers of radiation then, which subsequently became known. I have often wondered if it would have ever been dropped if they had known the long and far reaching effects of radiation poisoning for future generations. I can't answer any more than just horror and relief. I must say that I was super pregnant, and maybe you are kind of turned in at that point.

Ken: You brought out at one time that most women considered a career secondary to marriage; that women looked upon themselves as being secondary in the job market and careerwise, as opposed to having a child and staying home. Did you consider your career secondary, or did you just put it aside for a while.

Ed: I probably just put it aside, but I don't remember any conscious thought. It was just a postponing of it. I have no memory of that at all. I suspect it might be described as putting it aside, rather than abandonment of the whole career thing.

Ken: I mean you still planned eventually -

Ed: No. I can't say. I don't mean to say I planned. I don't believe I have ever had long range plans about anything particularly, in that sense.

Ken: What things in your life experience would you advise your daughter to avoid?

Ed: None. Absolutely none. It is really quite an academic question, however. Our lives are just too terribly different. I can't imagine us confronting the same kind of choices.

Ken: Did you ever think you might have done things differently if you had never had a child?

Ed: No. I had never really fantasied that at all. What is your expectation about that question?

Ken: I don't know. I think my expectation was that you would simply say you had developed another career, or gone in a different direction, or something. When you were working and decided to have a child, you had a career, and then diverted that career and went back to a different type of work. I wondered if you would never have gone into rehabilitation or would have gone ahead in some other field.

Ed: Chance plays an awful lot. I don't even think that women probably even heard the word career. I think the whole expression of career, the way it is used sociologically now, is definitely a post World War II word - a different word. I think the appropriate thing would have been a more satisfying job.

Ken: You considered it a job, then, not a career?

Ed: I think that's probably the word.

Ken: What were your difficulties as a single parent for a while when your child was young, and then later when she was a teen ager?

Ed: It's really a fair question. The difficulties with a younger child, four or five years old, were extremely different than the ones with the adolescent or teen ager. In the early years, with the kindergarten, the major problems were more just the physical maintenance.

I did get subsequently a fair amount of help from my mother. But there were long periods when she was having emotional problems herself. Then her widowhood occurred, and I had to bear the burden of the newly widowed mother, who was helpless, as well as a young child; get a job, and the whole bit.

I remember very distinctly the job I took in rehabilitation. At that time they had a year's probation because they felt it was a job that you principally, at the time, learned on the job because there weren't any training programs where you could learn. So it was pretty much an on-the-job sort of thing, and it would really be a year before they could tell whether you would be able to be good at it and learn the job.

For that year I commuted between East Oakland and way out in San Francisco on Van Ness Avenue. So there was the matter of child care, and black women generally were the only ones available. They had the problems of their children, and they were often so tired. I would arrive home. Then their husband was going to pick them up. Their husbands had to deliver them to my house, and then I would get away. So I had fifteen, sixteen, seventeen hours days. And positively any kinds of a social life came to a grinding halt. I never positively dated anybody during that year. It took everything I had just to keep things afloat. And when the year was up I moved to San Francisco because numbers of times the call would come through, "your child is sick" or something where you would have to dash off. There was always the worry of it. It was a very heavy year.

Ken: Where there nursery schools then?

Ed: A few. But by that time she was in grade school. There was still the after school care, and the pre school. I had to get over to San Francisco at 8 o'clock in the morning, and then I would be home late - a long trip.

Ken: What about teen age problems?

Ed: She was fourteen. I wasn't working you know/ I had to quit. I had been at San Francisco State

Ed:

College on their Rehabilitation Faculty Program, and I guess it was in the summer of 1961 that I had quit work.

Bess had been principally cared for after school and so on by my next door neighbor, who was a beautiful grandma. She was always more helpful and supportive in different ways than my mother was. My mother vacillated between depression and highs. More depression. At any rate, one of the things that Bess said was that she really wasn't accustomed to my being home. It really represented a strange kind of adaption for her. She was not really giving us any extraordinary troubles that a fourteen year old would not be expected to, or might be expected to give. You had to figure out where to set limits. She was going around with one fellow, and they were both very, very dear. She had somebody else. He didn't understand how she was reacting to her father's death. Really the worst part of that acting out kind of behavior was over.

And the main thing I found it very difficult to accept is that she could not bear my sadness, my sorrow. I had to be the tower of strength. Her reaction was seldom ever one of sympathy or understanding. She was suffering herself a great deal. I did go to a psychiatrist at that point to try and keep things in balance. I was doing a fair amount of dating then too. And friends were awfully close. She wasn't giving me too much grief.

Then, after a year, I went away and she went off to college. So this is why I knew she had to be a year older. She was fifteen, then, when Syd died. The worst of her acting out behavior was before then. It really wasn't so bad. We had made the decision that we might just get to glommy with each other if she didn't go away to school; that we might get into some really gothic kind of support thing because she was an only child. The way she puts it, sometimes, was that we nearly did her in with love.

I guess my concern, since we are dealing with my own losses, was that I was always super terrified that I would lose her because I had lost so many things. And I finally came out of it. I wanted to give her a little bit looser rein, and I just needed help to do it. So I got a little professional help at that junction for a lot of reasons. At that point she and her boy friend, Jimmy, were pretty supportive.

Ken:

What would you say was the best time of your life, the most satisfying?

Ed:

I liked the thirty-five to forty-five.

Ken:

Your age, or the date?

Ed: My age. I think there were certain kinds of satisfactions (I see why you asked - the years 1935 to 1945 were a tremendously exciting period, but it wasn't a comfortable one when you get to the age 34 or 35). But it was absolutely optimum. Everything was in pretty good shape. I had a great husband. I had a helluva good job; not too much trouble with the kid. Life was very, very good.

Ken: I think you have already answered the next question which was what was the worst time and the most frustrating.

Ed: I really feel that to me the most difficult time was about the last five years, and I don't think I have said that before. The big problem is the long widowhood, and the getting old (and it is a very different thing living alone in the world in a society that has an emphasis on youth). Those are the hard things now. I am not sure it is because I am in the middle of it.

Ken: The other question I was going to ask in line with this is - why did you decide to retire? How old were you when you retired?

Ed: Fifty-nine.

Ken: Why did you decide to retire early?

Ed: I didn't really retire. I still don't use the word. No. Mine was to change my life style - not necessarily retire. I had been at the medical school seven years, five of them in the medical education field, and the program wasn't going well - not only my part of it, but the whole concept of Community and Ambulatory Medicine, including my area, rehabilitation. I felt that what had been goals and dreams about changing the face of medical education just weren't happening. There was career dissatisfaction in that particular location, and I kind of wanted to fool around and just have no responsibilities. I don't eliminate going back to work at all. Would you put the question again?

Ken: I just wondered why you had retired early, and you said you hadn't. So what have you done then? You still didn't tell me why you left work, what you left work to do.

Ed: To test some other ways of doing things. That was all. To really play a lot. Most of my life I had pretty heavy responsibility, and I just simply wanted to have a respite from that way of living. As I think it over myself, it is to develop a sense of repose, almost in anticipation of

Ed: ultimately, ten years from now, of the probably slowing down - the loss of high energy that I have always had.

So the things I have done include the matter of doing things that were fun for me, absolutely fun. I've never taken a course since "not working" where there was much homework, outside of Spanish. Art, to free certain aspects of myself, Greek dancing, and going back to tennis. Something for me and something for the community; that is teaching English to Latinos and tutoring women re-entering the labor market, and information and referral.

The idea of structuring your life totally is kind of fun. I am enjoying it. I am not yet inclined to make the kind of commitment that is required as far as work is concerned. However, if I become extremely interested in this area of the ageing, if a job develops and I wanted to tie myself down, I would probably take a part time job - and I might.

Ken: What developed your interest in learning Spanish and living in Mexico, and going to South America?

Ed: I just decided on the South America thing. I decided just the other day why I'm going to South America and for how long. And it had to do with buying this old house. And I was reminded of it by what my friend Jane is going through in buying a second-hand house. There is so much to do you are just overwhelmed. And the idea of getting away from these awful things that have to be done. So I must have set up this idea of really going away when I first bought this house and found there were so many problems involved in trying to maintain a place as large as this. And the only way I could really deal with it is to go away. It is sort of an anti-climax almost that I had made a commitment to. Suddenly I got deeper and deeper into making this trip. The other thing was that when I began to find myself hesitating to take the trip alone for so long was the realization that I was going to get stuck in a rut. A fear comes over one. It is this being overtaken by some kind of free floating fear, anxiety if you will. Then I think it is very imperative that you (not you, me, others too, I think sometimes) take a great big, wild, large leap into the unknown. And certainly this was a great big leap into the unknown.

Ken: What I was trying to get at, is some people are Francophiles. Is there a word, Mexicophile? You went to live in Mexico. Why there? Is this a long standing thing?

Ed: Yes. I have been in love with Mexico for many years - ever since I first saw it. And I know people down there. I made several trips in the last couple of years. I took workshops down there while I was still working. And the idea of going to a foreign land to live while you are on a limited income -

Section of tape missing

Ken: What do you think of this type of interview? Do you have any suggestions of making it better? How did you feel about being interviewed? I shouldn't give you all these at once.

Ed: I looked forward to it with a sort of pleasure. However it began to be very much of a burden. I found it troublesome. As I read over some of the things myself, I thought the reason I answered that way was because Lucy asked me the question that way. There must be some way of developing open ended questions - the same kind of techniques and the same kind of questions that are used in a good psychiatric - a good history - a really good combination of personal work history where you, in interviewing technique, avoid very much making a question that is a funnel; that has to go in a slot.

Ken: You can ask an open ended question that forces one into a funnel, can't you? Because of the type of question. A feminist question is a feminist question.

Ed: Absolutely. I know this is probably one of the things you are getting to is how to avoid questions where you have to have yes or no answers. That's the worst.

I have always felt the burden in this whole sequence of all the work you have had to do. I felt constrained always at the probable lack of value of what I was doing. I am not convinced of the uniqueness of my life - the unexceptional aspect of it. To me it is my life. I am accustomed to it. I just can't imagine certain things being of interest. I wouldn't describe it as a sense of embarrassment, but putting myself in your place quite often. And all those words, and all that kind of thing which hung over me, plus the mundane aspect.

Ken: We were talking earlier of the influence of Christian Science on your life.

Ed: We were talking about a mutual friend who you said had "got religion", and you spoke of it as a very positive thing which caused me to recall that

Ed: my early exposure and conviction and belief in the precepts of Christian Science which states that all human beings are perfect, so there is no sense of original sin or badness, that the devil made me do it, or anything like that. Essentially I was perfect, and I could demonstrate that. When you consider that I was in Christian Science Sunday School and going to Christian Science Church from the time I was about seven years old until the time I was in my mid-teens, this is bound to be a very important influence in terms of my view of myself and my ability to cope, and not have a sense of sin. How this liberated me, when we get to this area of feminist questions, is going to be very interesting. The whole business of what is wrong, or are you evil or are you good, has a lot to do with it in terms of my family's reaction to being a free woman. That's kind of it. I think it would be safe to say it probably was an influence.

Ken: I don't know whether to ask these feminist questions now. Maybe when you come back from your trip we'll get a separate tape. No names, just set questions.

Ed: What are some of the questions?

Ken: Oh, when did you have your first menstrual period? Did your mother tell you? When did you first learn about sex, etc. Would you be interested in doing that?

Ed: Yes, I think it would be a better thing that it be an entirely separate subject.

10-1944

Page ____ of ____ pages

It:

None

Section: Union Relations Division: Priorities Control Division
Office: State Office, No. Calif. 1
W.M.C. 1 4

Dissemination of Priorities Information & the Rules & Regulations governing Controlled Referral to all Labor Unions in Critical Labor Shortage Area.

A.- A list of Production Priorities firms is periodically compiled and transmitted to each union involved (100) consisting only of the priority firms with which the particular union has contracts, numerically ordered. Periodically the List of Construction Priorities is transmitted in its entirety to all Bldg. & Constr. Trades Unions (160).

B - Appropriate Unions are notified of interim actions taken by Manpower Priority Committee of changes, cancellations or emergencies relating to manpower priority by telephone and/or mail (Cal-17%).

C - Control Files maintained:
File of priority firms with information re labor union and whether referral or non-referral union. Latter information obtained by telephone or form letter.

File of "Union Control Record" on which manpower priority firms are listed with their priority number to interpolate a numerical

a.- To supply union with information necessary to observe priority in referral.

b - To supply union with information necessary to observe priority in referral.

c - For orderly and accurate dissemination of appropriate priority or priorities to appropriate union or unions.

It:

Section:

Division:

Office:

ordering of priority firms that the union refers workers to.

D - Transmitting to 215 (Production and Construction Unions) local unions by circular letter, telephone or personal contact with individual officials, or groups of such officials, of such material as "Exceptions to and Clarification of Controlled Referral Order of November 15, 1943," "Essential and Locally Needed Activities," "Counting Employment for Manpower Ceiling Purposes," "Members and Alternates of Manpower Priorities Committee," and changes in Stabilization Procedure. This may be either initiated by the unit or upon special request of a particular union.

II Obtaining information from Union, i.e., Report of Activity and Labor Market Information.

A - Supply 215-reporting unions with Form P.C.D. 98 "Weekly Job Referral Record" by mail. Forms are self-explanatory.

B - Maintenance of Control Ledger or receipt of reports with breakdown & forward to R & A.

C - Letter, personal or telephone contact to get better, more accurate, refined, complete and prompt reports. Arrangements made for semi-monthly or monthly reports depending on the volume of referral.

d - To enable unions to more fully understand W.M.C., and to keep them posted of changes, and to provide them with aids for their operations as referral agencies.

a - To encourage promptness and define information wanted.

b - Provide means of check up on promptness and completeness.

c - To explain purpose & use, overcome resistance or clarify what is really wanted.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

Page 3 of 4 pages;

Unit:

Section:

Division:

Office:

Program, Function or Service	Activity Performed in Carrying out Function	Why is Activity Performed	Recommen- dation
I	II	III	Org. 'Off E. G. Unit ice IV V VI
	D - Special survey of labor market information with reference to specific occupations or groups of occupations. Devise form letter and forms for use of unions in supplying the information, if survey is large scale. Special information otherwise obtained by telephone or personal contact. Perusal of regular "Weekly Record of Job Referral."	d - To obtain needed information.	
III Supply Information Within Manpower Commission	A - Conference with Chiefs of Manpower Priorities Control Division, Utilization, Research & Analysis, and Procurement Agencies on Priorities Committee or memorandum to same regarding labor market information or relating to labor union relations as such.	a - Transmit findings	
IV Promotion of understanding & compliance on part of Labor Unions of War Manpower Commission Stabilization Plan and Objectives	A - Accept complaints and criticism of program on USES office operation or employers, or accept suggestion and forward to proper authority in office. Frequent decisions are made on matters of non-policy making nature and assistance given in working out a multitude of union problems.	a - To obtain cooperation and support of entire W.M.C. Program.	

It: Section: Division: Office:

B - Discuss with unions complaints against them rec'd from USES, Field Supervisors, Compliance Divn., Employers, or Procurement Agencies, et al.

C - Transmitting to all authorized referral unions, whether engaged in priority activities or not, by circular letter, telephone or personal contact with individual officials, or groups of such officials, of such material as "Exceptions to and Clarification of Controlled Referral Order of November 15, 1943," "Essential and Locally Needed Activities," "Counting Employment for Manpower Ceiling Purposes," "Members and Alternates of Manpower Priorities Committee," changes in Stabilization Procedure, and posters & signs published by Victory Manpower Committee. This may be either initiated by the unit or upon special request of a particular union.

State Office
WAR MANPOWER COMMISSION
153 Kearny Street, Sixth Floor
San Francisco, 8, California
February 12, 1944

FUNCTIONS OF PRIORITIES CONTROL DIVISION

- I. Liaison between the Procurement Agencies, the Manpower Priorities Committee and the Referral Agencies.
 - A. Ceilings.
 1. Receive all applications for adjusted ceilings from procurement agencies
 - a. Register and assign a case number
 - b. Forward to
 - (1) Reports & Analysis Division
 - (a) Assigned urgency rating and priority
 - (b) Checks various files such as ES 270, essentiality, previous actions, etc.
 - (2) Thence to Utilization Division
 - (a) Supplies occupational information
 - (b) Manning tables etc. checked
 - (c) Analyzes utilization of labor, possibilities of more women, etc.
 - (3) Thence to Training Division
 - (a) Supplies information as to extent of training program in force
 - (b) Degree of utilization of trainees
 - (c) Or opinion on feasibility of a training program to relieve employer's needs
 - (4) Thence to Analysis Branch of Utilization Division
 - (a) Makes recommendations in light of all information received
 - (b) Determines need for further study and specific follow up manpower utilization improvements studies to be made by Utilization Division
 - (5) Entire file returned to Priorities Division
 2. Presents case with recommendation to Manpower Priorities Committee
 - a. Presides at meetings and informs members of WMC recommendation
 - b. Receives from Committee their recommendations on case
 - (1) These recommendations subject to final decision of State Manpower Director
 3. Notifies all interested parties of:
 - a. Ceiling revisions
 - (1) Employer -- oral (phone), followed by written notification
 - (2) USES "order taking" office -- copy of written notification
 - (3) Sponsor -- copy of written notification
 - (4) R & A Division -- copy of written notification
 - (5) Unions not notified

Under this heading the review of reports, forms or tables received from other organizational units or levels or the preparation of reports, forms, or tables for the use of other organizational units or levels should be entered as an activity. Samples of copies of such reports, forms or tables are to be attached..

The first activity listed in Section II for each "function" should be lettered "A" with succeeding "activities" being lettered consecutively with capital letters.

III. Why is activity performed.

Enter briefly the reason for performing each activity listed in column II. The purpose should not be broadly stated in terms of the entire function, but should be specifically related to the individual activity..

Each stated purpose under Section III should be lettered using lower case letters. Since a purpose will be stated for each activity listed in Section II, the lower case lettering should in all cases follow and correspond to the lettered designations for the "activities!"

Recommendation:

Enter under appropriate sub-column (IV and V) the recommendation as to each activity listed in column II.

- (+) to continue
- (-) to eliminate
- (✓) to modify

The entry should be made under each appropriate sub-column (IV and V) first by the organizational unit preparing the form and next by the state office reviewing. Column VI is for the use of Regional and Headquarters staff.

A listing of those functions and activities which have been eliminated between July 1, 1944 and the time the review of activity is prepared should be attached to the review of activities for each organizational unit.

- b. All parties notified the same as Committee approvals
- 2. Often taken when the urgency is not high enough to warrant Committee action but a ceiling increase is nevertheless in order.

II. Information Dissemination

A. Advice to Procurement Agencies

- 1. On labor market conditions in various localities
- 2. General procedures to be followed
- 3. WAC policies

B. Trouble-Shooting

- 1. Trace priorities improperly assigned
- 2. Priorities inadvertently not assigned

C. Check Complaints on program not working properly

- 1. Contact referral agencies who allegedly are not following priority to clear the complaint
- 2. Failures to secure referrals -- determine whether low priority, poor working conditions, low wages, etc.

D. Answer all telephone inquiries requesting information on the program

- 1. Give rulings as applicable
- 2. Direct person to proper procurement agency

E. Interview all persons calling at office to secure information on the program.

III. Exceptions to and Modifications of Order

A. Initiates all such, subject to final approval by State Manpower Director

B. Disseminate to public or all interested persons.

IV. Violations of Employment Ceilings

A. Receive information from any source

- 1. Mainly through Reports and Analysis Division, whose staff makes regular checks of current employment of selected companies and match this with current ceiling. Also, they compare ES 270 present employment figures with current ceiling figures.
- 2. Procurement agencies, USES, Unions, general public,
- 3. Wages and Hours Division of Department of Labor - Field Audits

B. Employer, Procurement Agency, and Compliance Section contacted

1. If properly explained (veterans, handicapped, etc.) matter dropped.
2. If through misinformation or misunderstanding (advised by Compliance Section).
 - a. Advise employers to make no further hires until employer drops below his ceiling.
 - b. Administrative action to correct ceiling when necessary.
3. If willful or negligent (advised by Compliance Section)
 - a. Referrals stopped until further notice.
 - b. Procurement agency notified, with request that they cooperate to bring employer in line.
4. In extreme cases hearings of Labor-Management sub-committee to be arranged by Compliance Section.

C. Written copy of entire transaction placed in permanent file for reference in event ceiling increases requested in future.

V. Cutbacks, Cancellations, and Lay-offs.

- A. Receive information from any source.
- B. Verify with employer by phone if layoff will result.
- C. Notify U.S.E.S. office serving employer.
 1. Confirm by note to U.S.E.S. office and to Supervisor, Labor Recruitment and Transfer in State office - U.S.E.S. and Unions arrange for exit interview and placement.
- D. Notify Unions concerned by phone
- E. No further action unless U.S.E.S. (through Supervisor, Labor Recruitment) and Unions indicate they are unable to place all laid off workers.
- F. If surplus indicated
 1. U.S.E.S. and Unions asked to recommend ceiling adjustment for nearby employers who can employ them.
 - a. Take administrative or committee action to accomplish this.

VI. Adjustment of Ceilings Downward

- A. Receive information mainly from Reports and Analysis Divisions (as result of information on ES 270) that employment is far below current ceiling.
- B. Submit information to Procurement Agency for possible objection or recommendation regarding reductions or to determine whether further contracts are coming up which will use current ceiling.
- C. Acts upon concurrence of Procurement Agency.

WAR MANPOWER COMMISSION
Northern California

To: Personnel Utilization Committee
State Office

Survey Questionnaire

1. Name of Incumbent Mildred I. Kendall 4. Office W.M.C. State Office, No. Calif.
2. Classification, Title & Grade Supervisory Interviewer 5. Division Priorities. 6. Section

3. Organization Title Union Relations Officer 7. Basic Salary \$ Per Annum

To Be Filled in by Employee

8. Describe in your own words in detail the duties performed by you in your present position so that anyone who is unfamiliar with your position may by reading your description obtain a clear and accurate understanding of what you do, how you do it, the purpose of the work and its relationship to other work of the office and the extent of your personal responsibility. Use a separate paragraph for each kind of work. Indicate if the nature of your job or the work assigned to you is such as to result in some unscheduled time and if so how much. If additional space is required, attach a supplementary sheet.

Informational Liaison between the State War Manpower Commission Priorities Division and the Labor Unions within the Critical Labor Shortage Area and the establishment and promotion of union relations.

1 - I am responsible for supplying manpower priorities to all unions authorized as referral agencies (215). 1, 2, & 3 = 52 hrs. per mo.

a Supervise and review the periodical compilation of individual production priorities lists for approximately 100 local unions. These lists are composed of the firms having priorities and with whom the union has contracts.

2. Supervise the transmittal of any changes or cancellations of priority. This is done either by telephone or Form Cal-17, (Notice of Change in Priority).

2. Ascertain the union having jurisdiction when a new firm is given a priority by telephone or directing the mailing of a form letter.

b Supervise mailing of Construction Priorities Lists (160 unions).

c Notify appropriate union by telephone of emergency action taken by the Manpower Priorities Division, i.e., "specific referral" or "first call."

d Notify appropriate union by telephone of "Stop

(See att)

9. Describe fully how assignments are made to you by your supervisor and the review made of completed work.

By consultation & memorandum. Review of field work afforded by conference.

10. Do you supervise Employees? ☒ Yes ☐ No (a) Directly ☒ Yes ☐ No (b) Through Subordinates Yes ☐ No ☐

11. Describe in detail the methods and extent of the supervision you exercise over subordinates. Regular review of routine operation covering dissemination of Construction-Production Priorities, interim action, and reporting activity procedure of unions. Assignment of special work.

12. In the performance of your duties, what decisions do you personally make without reference to your superior? Cite specific examples.

All necessary decisions of a non-policy making nature in course of contact with labor unions, employers. Independent decisions of internal operations of unit.

Date October 27, 1944

Signed _____

(Employee)

To be Filled in by Supervisor

13. Are the above statements accurate and complete? (Indicate any inaccuracies or incomplete items).

Date _____

Signed _____

(Supervisor)

Comments of Division Chief or Local Office Manager

Date _____

Signed _____

(Division Chief or Local
Office Manager)

Utilization Committee Recommendation:

d (cont'd)

Referral" and subsequent rescission of that order.

2. I am responsible for obtaining supplemental information and referral activities reports from all unions authorized as referral agencies (215).

a Supervision of receipt of labor union reports procedure.

1. Make arrangements with all unions authorized as referral agencies to make a report of referrals weekly, semi-monthly or monthly, depending upon the volume of referral and to obtain a statement from them of the number of unfilled jobs, or the number of idle men, or any other pertinent comments the union wishes to make.

b Answer all correspondence & telephone calls relative to reports.

3. Supervision of all controls required to maintain the activities described above, including indices, control cards, and files.

- 4 - I am responsible for seeing to it that unions observe priority in referral and for accurate, prompt & complete reporting of activities (as in paragraph #2 above) by the unions. This requires periodic contact with some 215 local unions either by telephone or in person. The cooperation of labor unions in operating the Controlled Referral Program is obtained partly by promotion, persuasion and moral coercion, but primarily by carefully elucidating and clarifying the objectives of the War Manpower Commission Stabilization and Controlled Referral Program and the key responsibility the labor unions have in the success of that program. = 64 hrs. per mo.

a Resistance on the part of the Unions to making reports of activities to the War Manpower Commission had to be overcome and has been generally overcome (only about 5% continue to "hold out" against reporting). Emphasis in personal, as well as telephone contact, at the present time is being placed on improving the quality of the unions "Weekly Job Referral Record." This is an attempt to get more accurate, more complete and more refined reports, particularly with reference to the condition of the labor market, unfilled job openings, pertinent comments, and other supplemental information.

- 5 - I speak at meetings of Business Agents and Officials and discuss any aspect of Stabilization or Controlled Referral with Business Agents and officials individually. = 16 hrs. per mo.

- 6 - A wide variety of "trouble-shooting" for the unions may

6 (cont'd)

be handled either by me, or if the problem is outside of my province, e.g., a complaint against a U.S.E.S. office or an alleged violation of Stabilization by an employer, it is referred by memorandum to the appropriate division. Generally the results of the action taken are transmitted back to me and are in turn given to the union which initiated the "trouble." 24 hrs. per mo.

- 7 - I direct to the unions circularization of such data as changes in Stabilization Regulations, and they have been provided with information with which to work effectively as authorized referral agencies, such as "Exceptions to and Clarification of Controlled Referral Order of November 15, 1943," list of Essential and Locally Needed Activities," "Counting Employment for Manpower Ceiling Purposes," and a list of the Members and Alternates of the Manpower Priorities Committee. I supply the union officials with posters and similar "propaganda" material for their dissemination among the members for use or in their hiring halls in order to strengthen their position with their membership while carrying out controlled referral. This is in order to effect clarification and elicit cooperation from the unions. 4 hrs. per mo.
- 8 - Brief weekly synopses of personal contact are written in the form of a memorandum to the Chief of the Department, copy to State Director. These synopses contain such matters as "sentiments" of union toward S.M.C., its rules & regulations, suggestions offered by unions for solution of problems, and any other pertinent information such as out-migration, surplus of labor, decline in membership, etc. 4 hrs. per mo.
- 9 - Special memorandum requesting action or proposing a solution to a particular problem that has been brought up in the course of contact are addressed to the appropriate Division Chief or State Director. 16 hrs. per mo.
- 10 - Conferences with procurement agencies on Manpower Priorities Committee relative to specific labor market information or requests from them for special occupational surveys. 3 hrs. per mo.
- 11 - Consultation and conference with Chief of Priorities Control Division, Chief of the Reports and Analysis Section, and occasionally the Chief of the Utilization Division and members of his staff. 5 hrs. per mo.
- 12 - Reports of violation of Stabilization by unions are referred to me by the Compliance Section or appear in course of field visiting. Compliance is obtained by directing union to use proper procedure. 4 hrs. per mo.

Mildred Kendall

Union Liaison Officer

WLC - Northern California State Office

Priorities Control

153 Kearny St.

Union Contact

Doc Building

Under general supervision of the Chief, Priorities Control Division, acts as Union Liaison Officer of the Priorities Control Division to the labor unions within the Critical Labor Shortage Area with responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of effective working relations in carrying out the WLC Stabilization and Priority Referral Program. In this capacity contacts approximately 215 unions authorized as referral agencies through periodic personal, telephonic and/or correspondence contacts, furnishing necessary information concerning manpower priorities assigned to enable the unions to carry out the priority referral regulations and eliciting complete information from the unions on reports required by the Priorities Control Division on referral activities; observes compliance of the unions in regard to referral regulations, assisting unions requiring special attention.

1

Presents the programs of WLC Stabilization and Priority Referral within the Critical Labor Shortage Area to approximately

215 unions, establishing and maintaining favorable working relations through periodic personal visits, telephone calls and/or correspondence elicits their cooperation in maintaining effective referral activities under the Priority Referral Program; furnishes information to maintain currency of program (ie individual production priorities lists for approximately 100 unions; or referrals to be designated as "stop" referrals)

- 2 Checks on the observance of priorities assigned and referrals made by unions through reports of referrals weekly, (Weekly Job Referral Record, 100 #9), semi-monthly or monthly, and through visits to union offices and hiring halls; obtains such pertinent data as number of unfilled jobs or number of idle men; receives reports of violations of stabilization from the compliance unit.

- 3 Speaks at meetings of business agents and union officials, discussing any aspect of the Stabilization Program and Priority Referral Program to effectuate the programs and to secure the cooperation of the unions in carrying out the programs.

- 4 Receives a variety of requests from unions through correspondence and/or telephone calls; such requests requiring a knowledge of the overall program in order to be answered or to be transmitted to the proper division for further action. (i e complaints in regard to USMS local office activities concerning referrals.)
- 5 Recommends solutions to various problems related to the WIC Stabilization and Priority Referral programs as the problems arise in daily business contacts and/or through requests presented by the Chief of the Division or other division chiefs. (i e feasibility of granting an increase in ceiling to a specific firm.)
- 6 Attends Manpower Priorities Committee meetings to present labor market information and/or to be currently informed of priority assignments.
- 7 Supervises the activities involved in the notification of all unions authorized as referral agencies and any subsequent revisions of authorizations, the periodic compilation of production priorities established for 100 unions, the transmittal of any change or cancellation of construction priorities; the mailing of construction priority lists and the notification of unions of emergency actions or "stop" referrals. Devises systems to carry out control files of priorities assigned firms having labor union contracts, noting whether referral or non-referral union is indicated and a file of union control records listing manpower priority firms with priority numbers assigned in numerical order for referral purposes.

- 13 - The complaints against unions initiated by the U.S.E.S. offices or employers are frequently referred to me. Union is contacted, the criticism is discussed and correction or understanding is arrived at. = 4 hrs. per mo.
- 14 - I occasionally attend Manpower Priorities Committee meetings to keep abreast of matters under discussion by the Committee as well as to supply occasional data to it. = 7 hrs. per mo.
- 15 - I am a regularly scheduled speaker at the Induction Training Class on the subject "Union Relations and the U.S.E.S." = 3 hrs. per mo.
- 16 - I am a labor representative of the Intra-Office Labor Management Committee. = 2 hrs. per mo.

Sheet Metal Workers' International Association

LOCAL UNION No. 104

224 GUERRERO STREET



PHONE MARKET 2930

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA



July 13th--1945

Mrs. Mildred Kendall
2133 Vallejo Street
San Francisco, California

Dear Mrs. Kendall;

I was sorry to learn that you are no longer connected with the Man Power Commission. On the many occasions I called at your office, your advice was always helpful, and your willingness to help me in matters that were unfamiliar to me, was certainly appreciated.

You have left with a record you can be very proud of, and the capable manner in which you discharged your duties on the Man Power Commission is well known to those who had occasion to call at your office on matters pertaining to the many Man Power problems.

Thank you again for your courtesies, and wishing you every success in any future undertaking you may be connected with, I am

Very truly yours,

Frank Burk

Frank Burk-Local #104
Business Representative

co'b

SF Call Bulletin

1943? - 44

THE

Will Honor Women in and Civilian Industries

Dinner Tonight Salute of Recognition for Those on Labor Front

By Hazel Holly

WOMEN IN WAR INDUSTRY and women in essential civilian industries will be honor guests tonight when the industrial department of the Y. W. C. A. salutes the women "who have gone to war on the labor front" at a dinner at 620 Sutter Street.

"Victory is no longer a job for men alone," Mrs. Richard Link, chairman of the industrial committee, said in announcing the dinner. "Women are playing an increasingly important part, both in their traditional role of 'keeping the home fires burning' and their new role of helping to keep our war industries rolling."

"This dinner for women in industry is a gesture of recognition for the millions of women throughout the country who are replacing men on the home front. Honor guests will include war workers—women from the shipyards, from the assembly lines, from the shops, the warehouses and the waterfront."

* * *

"ESSENTIAL civilian industries will be represented by the

women and girls who have donned overalls to take jobs in service stations and garages," she added, "and by the women who are driving trucks, operating busses, and collecting fares on streetcars."

"Then there are the thousands of women who have taken over where men left off in the building service and culinary trades. Women who are operating elevators, cleaning buildings—the cooks, the bus girls, the laundry workers. Every one of them is essential to the home front in wartime."

* * *

WORKING WITH Mrs. Link in preparations for the dinner are Mrs. Mildred DuRose Kendall, who will preside, and Miss June Hunt, who will bring a message from the National Industrial Council of the Y. W. C. A.

October 25, 1944

MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Albert J. Evers
From: Mildred Kendall
Subject: Job Classification

Because we are stripped for staff and generally harassed, I am taking this method of communication.

You told me you would "speak to Mr. Roeth," but I want you to be convinced of the propriety and validity of my request for reclassification based on the work I do and have done. The reasons for my request are "positive" and not "negative" which impression I may have left you with yesterday because of interruptions.

Nearly a year ago I came to the State Office and took a job which had no form or defined scope - just a vague general purpose. I was peculiarly well equipped to reduce this "general" purpose to a working unit and coordinate this unit not only to the Priorities Divisions but to other operations within the State Office. The background and experience I had were not acquired, generally, by experience while in the U.S.E.S., but because of extra curricular work, research and study which I undertook on my own initiative.

At the time I came into the State Office, I received a promotion to Supervising Interviewer. I was scheduled for this promotion for the work I was doing in the field office of the U.S.E.S. at the time (Ass't Mgr. of the Jr. Division and Supervisor of Interviewing). If the position which I accepted in the State Office had been defined and classified, I am confident it would not have been Supervisory Interviewer. So, I was promoted, but not to a classification of the work done. The job has never been classified.

Let me review briefly the developments in the past eleven and a half months. An outline was given to me of the job to be done: to set up a system or operation to effect the Controlled Referral Order of November 15, 1943, as it related to all the labor unions in the Critical Labor Shortage Area. Wide latitude was given to me, limited by existing rules and regulations of the W.M.C. Coordinating the work with the functions and systems devised for the general program of Manpower

Priorities Control Division, I independently set up the operating unit, system files, methods, controls, to bring to over 200 local unions in the Area not only priorities, but aids to operating as referral agencies. Coupled with this technical aspect was the job of "promoting" compliance. This promotion of compliance extended way beyond simply "priority referral". It has entered into virtually every point that any union may wish to establish a contact for any reason or for any purpose, at the State Office. Trouble shooting for unions "above and beyond the call of duty" in the name of promotion of good relations. I've been a source to many members of the staff, both administrative and staff workers, of information and detail about labor unions; functions, structure, location, officials, jurisdiction, etc.

Not all, to be sure, but a great part of the aforementioned activity has been carried out "on my own." For these reasons, I feel a review of my position and an objective classification of my job is in order.

MILDRED EDMONDSON INTERVIEW

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